

Minutes

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 1424 Clarke Rd, London
(Hybrid Meeting)

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

Members Present:

Jim Craigmile

Skylar Franke

Tom Heeman

Debbie Heffernan

Anna Hopkins

Sandy Levin

Hugh McDermid - Online

Paul Mitchell

Harj Nijjar - Online

Brian Petrie - Chair

Mark Schadenberg

Dean Trentowsky

George Way

Scotty Zehr

Regrets:

Peter Cuddy

Staff Present:

Jenna Allain

Tracy Annett

Erin Caroll

Emily Chandler

Ben Dafoe

Rob Davies

Brad Glasman

Justin Henry

Teresa Hollingsworth

Tatianna Lozier

Christine Saracino

Jessica Schnaithmann

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 made 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: August 29, 2023

Mover: S.Zehr

Secunder: S.Franke

THAT that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors' minutes dated August 29, 2023, including any closed session minutes, as posted on the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority web-site.

Carried.

5.2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5.3. Correspondence – Hamilton Conservation Authority

Mover: P.Mitchell

Secunder: A.Hopkins

THAT the Board of Directors receive the correspondence for information.

Carried.

6. Reports – For Consideration

6.1. Upper Thames Barrier Position Paper

(Report attached)

Concerns were raised around the term 'valid purpose' and who decides the definition.

Mover: S.Levin

Secunder: A.Hopkins

THAT the Board of Directors refer back to staff to ask legal counsel to help with the wording and report back at the next meeting.

Carried.

6.2. UTRCA Encampment/Unhoused Position Paper

(Report attached)

The policy will be created by pulling together commonalities in policies from the larger Municipalities in the watershed and revised to meet the needs of the Authority. Staff have been in consultation with the City of London and will likely have a staff member sit on their committee so the UTRCA can be involved in the process and learn.

Members were encouraged to ask their Municipal staff to reach out to UTRCA staff if they haven't already been in contact.

Mover: M.Schadenberg

Seconder: G.Way

THAT the Board of Directors approve the recommendations of the report.

Carried.

6.3. Updated Strategic Plan

(Report attached)

Staff confirmed that seeking input from Indigenous partners would be part of the consultation process. It was also confirmed that public meetings will be held as part of the public and external engagement.

Members suggested staff conduct a comprehensive service inventory as part of the strategic plan update. Members suggested the strategic plan include a suite of key performance indicators.

Members were encouraged to reach out to staff if they have recently gone through a strategic plan update process with their Municipality and share information on their experience that could be helpful.

Mover: T.Heeman

Seconder: G.Way

THAT the Board direct staff to engage a consultant to develop an updated strategic plan to define the Authority's values and direction, as well as to support the Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy.

Carried.

6.4. 2024 Forestry Service Fees

(Report attached)

It was noted there would be significant funding opportunities to offset landowner costs with the new Two Billion Trees program, in addition to an increasing number of grant programs.

Mover: S.Franke

Secunder: D.Heffernan

Approve the recommendation.

THAT the proposed 2024 Forestry Services fees be approved by the UTRCA Board of Directors for implementation following approval.

Carried.

6.5. Cost Apportionment Agreement Update and Quarterly Progress Report

S.Levin suggested an amendment to the recommendation to add a deadline of March 31st 2024 to execute the Cost Apportionment Agreements.

Mover: S.Levin

Secunder: P.Mitchell

THAT the October 1, 2023 Progress Report be received; and further that staff be directed to request an extension to the January 1, 2024 deadline to March 31st, 2024 to execute Cost Apportioning Agreements with all member municipalities.

Carried.

7. Reports – In-Camera

There were no reports to be discussed in closed session.

8. Reports – For Information

8.1. Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report

(Report attached)

Mover: S.Franke

Secunder: G.Way

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

8.2. Project Status Update

Mover: A.Hopkins

Secunder: D.Heffernan

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.3. 2024 Preliminary Budget Discussion

The members discussed the proposed additional Full Time Equivalent (FTEs), confirmed the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act were driving the speed and intensity of the proposed FTEs, and asked staff to provide a table identifying which pieces of legislation were driving the creation of each proposed FTE.

It was noted that with the freeze on planning fees still in place, any additional cost recovery required will be downloaded to Municipalities as an unintended consequence from the Provincial changes.

It was confirmed the rest of the information requested at the August meeting will be presented at the October meeting.

Staff confirmed that the draft budget will be circulated with an offer to have a staff present the budget to Councils. The Chair asked the members to encourage their fellow councilors to reach out to staff with any questions. Members were also encouraged to prepare their councils for budget discussions and reach out to staff if they have any questions.

Members felt it was important to see the delivery of reduced timelines and the realized gains by the 2025 budget. Concerns were raised over the misalignment between Municipal timelines and lack of Conservation Authority timelines for Subdivision files and the consequences felt by the Municipalities. The Chair encouraged members to engage staff directly if contentious issues arise.

Mover: A.Hopkins

Secunder: S.Franke

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.4. Children's Safety Village Progress Update

Mover: P.Mitchell

Secunder: S.Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

8.5. September For Your Information Report

The September For Your Information Report was presented for the member's information.

9. Reports – Committees

9.1. Finance and Audit Committee

There was nothing to report from the Finance and Audit Committee.

9.2. Hearing Committee

There was nothing to report from the Hearing Committee.

10. Notices of Motion for October 31, 2023

There were no notices of motion.

11. Chair's Comments

The Chair reported that he and the General Manager attended Conservation Ontario on Monday. The Chair noted there was discussion around the Provincial and Federal government getting more involved and more providing funding for mapping updates. Other topics covered included Conservation Ontario's 2024 business plans, the new budget process, and the potential release of updated Section 28 Regulations.

The Chair reported the UTRCA's share of the Conservation Ontario cost will be going down by \$1,000.00.

The Chair reported that registration for the Latornell Symposium filled up very quickly this year. The organizing committee will be looking at a new, larger venue for next year to accommodate more participants.

12. Member's Comments

M.Schadenberg told the Board about the upcoming TD Tree days in Woodstock, being held Saturday October 14th at 9:00am.

T.Heeman informed the Board that Thames Centre passed a Recreation Master Plan, and there was a recommendation for engagement with UTRCA on the rejuvenation of the Mill Pond trail.

13. General Manager's Comments

The General Manager outlined the following UTRCA's plans for staff to recognize and acknowledge the National Day for Truth and reconciliation:

- The gatehouses at Fanshawe, Wildwood, and Pittock Conservation Areas will be illuminated in orange from September 25 to October 1,
- Wednesday, September 27th at 9:00 am a Water Blessing will be performed by a member of Oneida Nation of the Thames and Chippewa of the Thames First Nation,
- Thursday, September 28 staff will be encouraged to wear their orange shirts in recognition of Orange Shirt Day,
- Friday, September 29th there will be a Time in Nature hike.

In addition to the planned activities, staff will be provided with additional materials on Truth and Reconciliation.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50am on a motion by S.Franke.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tracy Annett", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tracy Annett, General Manager
Att.