

Minutes

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

Board of Directors Meeting

9:30am Tuesday, June 25, 2024 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 – Online

Debbie Heffernan

Anna Hopkins – Online

Sandy Levin

Hugh McDermid

Paul Mitchell

Harj Nijjar – Online

Brian Petrie – Chair

Mark Schadenberg – Online

Dean Trentowsky

George Way

Regrets:

Peter Cuddy

Scotty Zehr

Solicitor: Grant Inglis

Staff Present:

Jenna Allain

Emily Chandler

Ben Dafoe – Online

Karlee Flear

Justin Henry

Brad Hertner

Tatianna Lozier

Cathy Quinlan

Christine Saracino

Graeme Shaw

Chris Tasker

Tara Tchir – Online

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: May 28, 2024

Mover: George Way

Secunder: Debbie Heffernan

THAT that the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

Carried.

5.2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5.3. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

6. Reports – For Consideration

6.1. 2025 Budget Concepts and Communications Overview

Staff provided an overview of the report, noting the next month will provide more detail and clarity on the projected 2025 draft budget.

Members raised concerns over the potential impacts the asset management plan could have on the 2025 budget. Staff confirmed the plan would take time to be created and fully implemented and did not expect it to have an impact on the 2025 budget.

A City of London member noted City staff have begun to delve into natural asset mapping to account for urban forestry as a natural asset to manage and may be open to sharing their expertise.

A City of London member noted a motion would be going to a City of London Committee tomorrow with a recommendation to use their Auditors to provide service review training to the City's Agencies, Boards, and Commissions (ABCs) and noted they would share the details with staff.

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Skylar Franke

THAT the Board of Directors approve the recommendation.

Carried.

Approved Recommendation:

1. THAT the 2025 Budget Concepts report be received.
2. THAT the 2025 Draft Budget be developed in conformity to the Conservation Authorities Act (CAA) and Ontario Regulation 402/22: Budget and Apportionment.
3. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to include a provision for an economic increase (COLA) of 3% and address inflationary pressures.
4. That staff BE DIRECTED to prepare a budget communications overview to circulate to the Finance and Audit Committee for feedback before being finalized.

6.2. 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Project Update

The Board discussed the access elevator at Fanshawe Dam.

The Board discussed the potential impact of asset management plans on the competition for WECI funding.

The Board discussed the financial implications of the late start to WECI projects due to the timing of funding.

Staff noted the WECI agreements should be in place in time for a report at the August meeting.

Mover: Jim Craigmile

Seconder: Debbie Heffernan

THAT the Board of Directors approve the recommendation.

Carried.

Approved Recommendation:

That the Board approves the WECI application as submitted.

6.3. Watershed Strategy and Strategic Plan Consultation

Staff confirmed a consultant had not been hired yet. Members ask for an update from the General Manager when she returns.

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors approve the recommendation.

Carried.

Approved Recommendation:

THAT the Board direct staff to begin municipal, partner, interest holder, and public consultation on the UTRCA Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy (Draft June, 2024) (“Watershed Strategy”) and UTRCA Strategic Plan.

7. Reports – In-Camera

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Sandy Levin

THAT the Board of Directors adjourn to Closed Session – In Camera.

Carried.

The Board adjourned to closed session 10:05am to discuss personal matters about an identifiable individual.

The Board rose from closed session at 10:27am and reported progress.

7.1. Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual – General Manager Compensation Recommendation

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: George Way

That the Board of Directors approve the recommendation.

Carried.

Approved Recommendation: THAT the Board accept the recommendation of the Chair and Vice Chair with respect to adjusting the General Managers compensation in accordance with section 5.02 of the UTRCA Personnel Regulations.

8. Reports – For Information

8.1. Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report

Members expressed frustration that the outside narrative is focused on the few exceptions instead of the rudimentary files that get done within the required timelines.

Members expressed concerns with the decision of the City of London to expand the scope of the streamlining review initiative Request for Proposal (RFP). Members felt that the new component was unrelated to the streamlining review initiative and should be dealt with in a separate RFP. Staff provided an update on the RFP and noted the City has held firm on incorporating the new scope into the streamlining review initiative RFP. Members questioned whether this direction was coming from staff or Council. Concerns were raised around the delay and the change in scope. Some city of London members stated they would reach out to City staff.

Mover: Debbie Heffernan

Seconder: Hugh McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

8.2. Project Status Update

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

8.3. GREEN Summit Presentation

Staff provided a summary of the GREEN Leaders program and GREEN summit.

Skylar Franke attended one of the class room presentations at a school in her Ward and thanked staff for the opportunity to attend.

Members thanked staff for the presentation and congratulated them on the successes of the program.

Staff noted the next steps to expand the program included looking for a corporate sponsor and expanding the program north into new school boards.

The Chair shared his experience being on the panel at the GREEN summit and highlighted the importance of the Civic engagement aspect of the program. He encouraged all Board members, where possible, to get involved next year if schools in their area are participating in the program.

Mover: George Way

Seconder: Anna Hopkins

THAT the Board of Directors receives the presentation for information.

Carried.

8.4. Thames River Current – June Edition

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

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Dean Trentowsky

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

9. Reports – Committees

9.1. Finance and Audit Committee – May 24th Meeting Decisions

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

9.2. Hearing Committee – May 28, 2024 Hearing Decisions

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Skylar Franke

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

10. Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion for August 27th, 2024.

11. Chair's Comments

The Chair noted the amount of work staff are doing and emphasised the importance of spreading the positive messages of what the UTRCA is doing.

The Chair provided further comments on his experience with the GREEN leaders program, noting it was inspiring listening to the students and their open approach to solving problems. He expressed a wish to see the whole Board be invited to participate in the GREEN leaders program next year.

12. Member's Comments

Skylar Franke provided further comments on her experience with the GREEN leaders program.

Jim Craigmile informed the Board that Brent Kittmer, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the Town of St. Marys, recently gave a presentation on cyber security and felt that staff may be interested in hearing the presentation. Members agreed it would be useful. Jim Craigmile will work with staff to set up a presentation from Brent Kittmer on cyber security at a future meeting.

13. General Manager's Comments

In the General Manager's absence, Brent Verscheure, Manager of Lands, Facilities, and Conservation Areas, provided an update on the Lands strategy engagement sessions. Three Municipal engagement sessions have been completed; Oxford County, Middlesex County, and the City of London. The fourth and final Municipal engagement session takes place tomorrow in Perth County. The Lands Strategy will be in front of the Board for approval at the September meeting. Each session was recorded and will be circulated to everyone on the invitees list. The engagement platforms will remain open over the summer for additional feedback. The public consultations will take place over the summer.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:04 am on a motion by Skylar Franke.

Tracy Annett, General Manager
/mv

Jenna Allain, Acting General Manager