

GREY SAUBLE CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES
Full Authority Board of Directors
Wednesday, October 23, 2024, at 1:15 p.m.

The Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) Board of Directors' meeting was held in a hybrid format of in-person at the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Administrative Office and virtually via the meeting application, WebEx.

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Nadia Dubyk called the meeting to order at 1:16 p.m., welcomed all those present in person and virtually and provided a land acknowledgment declaration.

Directors Present In-Person: Vice Chair Nadia Dubyk, Scott Mackey, Tobin Day, Scott Greig, Tony Bell, Sue Carleton, Jennifer Shaw

Directors Present Virtually: Jon Farmer

Regrets: Chair Robert Uhrig, Kathy Durst, Alex Maxwell

Staff Present: CAO, Tim Lanthier; Administrative Assistant, Valerie Coleman; Manager of Information Services, Gloria Dangerfield; Manager of Financial and Human Resource Services, Alison Armstrong; Conservation Lands Technician, Margaret Potter; Water Resources Coordinator, John Bittorf

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

The Directors were reminded to disclose any pecuniary interest that may arise during the course of the meeting.

3. Call for Additional Agenda Items

Nothing at this time.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Motion No.:
FA-24-086

Moved By: Tony Bell
Seconded By: Jennifer Shaw

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the agenda of October 23, 2024.

Carried

5. **Approval of Minutes**

Motion No.:
FA-24-087

Moved By: Sue Carleton
Seconded By: Scott Mackey

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the Full Authority minutes of September 25, 2024.

Carried

6. **Business Out of Minutes**

Nothing at this time.

7. **Consent Agenda**

Motion No.:
FA-24-088

Moved By: Scott Greig
Seconded By: Jennifer Shaw

THAT in consideration of the Consent Agenda Items listed on the October 23, 2024, agenda, the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors receives the following items: (i) Environmental Planning – Section 28 Permits – September 2024; (ii) Administration – Receipts & Expenses – September 2024; (iv) Conservation Ontario Council Minutes – April 15, 2024; (vi) Media – Recent Media Articles

Carried

8. **Business Items**

i. Administration

a. Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy Draft

CAO, Tim Lanthier spoke with respect to the drafted Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy as required by the Ministry under the Conservation Authorities Act (CAA).

Mr. Lanthier outlined and detailed the contents of the finished report. As part of the process of drafting the document, staff conducted a gap analysis to discover and assess any barriers or deficiencies within GSCA's programs and services and assessed the cost of addressing these.

It was noted that GSCA is required to include a consultation period for this document. Upon approval, staff will circulate to municipal partners, Indigenous community partners, and will post on the GSCA website.

There was discussion on how the document will be used moving forward.

Motion No.: FA-24-089	Moved By: Seconded By:	Sue Carleton Jon Farmer
--	---	--

WHEREAS Ontario Regulation 686/21 – Mandatory Programs and Services Regulation, requires conservation authorities to develop and implement a Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy on or before December 31, 2024,

AND WHEREAS GSCA has developed a draft Strategy,

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors direct staff to circulate this Strategy for consultation.

Carried

b. Awarding of Auditor Tender

Manager of Finance and Human Resources Services, Alison Armstrong reviewed the results of the Auditing Services tender.

The RFP was issued on September 4th, 2024, after receiving approval from the Board of Directors in August. There were three respondents, Baker Tilly, BDO, and Lekadir. The Auditor Sub-Committee met to open and score the RFP submissions. Baker Tilly came in as the highest scoring proposal and the lowest cost.

Staff recommended awarding the tender to Baker Tilly for a five-year period.

Motion No.: FA-24-090	Moved By: Seconded By:	Scott Mackey Tony Bell
--	---	---

WHEREAS the GSCA Board of Director's passed resolution FA-24-068 at the August 28, 2024 Full Authority Meeting directing staff to issue an RFP for audit services for the five year period commencing with 2024;

AND WHEREAS staff recommended a selection committee be established to review and prepare a recommendation.

AND WHEREAS GSCA staff issued an RFP to this effect on September 4, 2024, and received three (3) proposals;

THAT the GSCA Board of Directors award Baker Tilly SGB LLP the contract for audit services for the five-year term 2024-2029.

Carried

c. 2025 Draft Budget for Circulation

CAO, Tim Lanthier, spoke with respect to the draft 2025 Budget noting that staff strived to be as conservative as possible in drafting this budget.

While the total budget remains generally consistent with 2024, an increase in levy of \$92,508, or 5.37%, will address an anticipated drop in self-generated revenue and reduced dependency on reserves and surplus.

Staff expect to see reduced revenue and expenses in the Environmental Planning, Forestry, and Environmental Education departments for 2025. The total number of permitting and planning applications have decreased slightly, and while staff are still very busy, it was decided to not fill an open position within the department for 2025. The Forestry staff expect to see less revenue from planting in 2025, which is not supported by levy. With construction anticipated to begin in 2025, staff have opted to not run their summer day camp. It was noted that staff spent significant time and effort to find an alternative location. However, the Environmental Education department is exploring opportunities to provide programming to other organizations and agencies on a fee-for-service basis.

A Member asked for clarification in the reduction of revenue in the planning department. Mr. Lanthier responded that a combination of the provincially mandated fee freeze and reduction in files accounts for the drop in revenue. It was noted that in some cases some files can take an extended amount of time to complete.

A Member asked for clarification on the increase in the GIS department. Mr. Lanthier responded that this corresponds with a similar decrease in Water Management to account for a recent staffing change.

A Member asked about the Ministry ordered Environmental Planning fee freeze and what work is being done to lift the freeze. Mr. Lanthier and Vice Chair Dubyk met with MPP Rick Byers to discuss the fee freeze and the constraints it puts on the department. At a broader level, Conservation Ontario has been meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources to discuss options, including a provision to allow an inflation-based adjustment. Staff have not factored any changes to the fees into the budget in anticipation of there being a continued fee freeze from the Province.

A member asked about the cost of the explore guide and if staff are considering advertising revenues. Mr. Lanthier responded that staff are looking into it, however; in the interim, staff opted to draw the full cost from parking revenues that would otherwise be going into reserves. Should any advertising revenue be generated, the difference will be re-directed to Lands Reserve.

Mr. Lanthier asked for direction from Members regarding including the Admin Centre renovation costs into the capital budget and apportionment. Direction from Members was as soon as possible.

Motion No.:
FA-24-091

Moved By: Scott Mackey
Seconded By: Tony Bell

WHEREAS GSCA Staff have prepared the 2025 Draft Budget for the Board of Directors' consideration,

AND WHEREAS the Conservation Authorities Act requires that this Draft Budget be circulated to participating municipalities for a minimum 30-day commenting period,

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors receive the 2025 Draft Budget,

AND THAT Staff be directed to distribute the 2025 Draft Budget and Budget Companion to participating municipalities for the minimum 30-day review period.

AND THAT Staff bring a report before the Board of Directors at the November 2024 meeting of the Board.

Carried

d. Personnel Policy Final

Manager of Finance and Human Resource Services, Alison Armstrong, spoke to the requested amendments to the draft Personnel Policy.

Ms. Armstrong spoke to the proposed wording of the bereavement leave.

There was discussion around the proposed wording and the enforcement implications of the bereavement leave section.

There was discussion around the changes to the calculation and maintenance of the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA).

Members asked for staff to look at the wording of the bereavement leave section, with the addition of pre-birth child loss time for the non-child carrying parent or guardian wording.

CAO Lanthier requested that the Board of Directors move a resolution to accept the remainder of the Personnel Policy, save and except any items still under consideration by the Board.

Motion No.: FA-24-092	Moved By: Seconded By:	Jon Farmer Jennifer Shaw
--	---	---

WHEREAS, GSCA’s Personnel Policy has not had substantive review and change for over 20 years,

AND WHEREAS, Management deems that it is necessary to update the policy to better reflect organizational needs,

THAT, the GSCA Board of Directors endorses the updated GSCA Personnel Policy as detailed in the attached document with the exception of Bereavement and Cost of Living Adjustment sections.

Carried

A Member put a motion on the floor to amend the wording of the Cost-of-Living Adjustment section.

Motion No.: FA-24-094	Moved By: Seconded By:	Scott Mackey Sue Carleton
--	---	--

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve an amendment to the COLA adjustment wording.

Defeated

A Member put a motion on the floor to amend the wording of the Cost-of-Living Adjustment section to remove percentages from the calculation.

Motion No.: FA-24-095	Moved By: Seconded By:	Scott Greig Scott Mackey
---------------------------------	---	---

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve an amendment to the COLA section to remove the application of percentages.

Defeated

A Member put a motion on the floor to approve the Cost-of-Living Adjustment section of the Personnel Policy as presented in the draft document provided in the Board Agenda Package.

Motion No.: FA-24-096	Moved By: Seconded By:	Sue Carleton Tony Bell
---------------------------------	---	---

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve leaving the COLA wording as written.

Carried

e. December and January Board Meeting Motions

Motion No.: FA-24-097	Moved By: Seconded By:	Jennifer Shaw Sue Carleton
---------------------------------	---	---

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the cancellation of the December 18, 2024, Board of Directors meeting.

Carried

Motion No.: FA-24-098	Moved By: Seconded By:	Scott Mackey Tony Bell
---------------------------------	---	---

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors set January 22, 2025, as the date of the GSCA Annual General Meeting.

Carried

ii. Water Management
Nothing at this time.

iii. Environmental Planning
Nothing at this time.

iv. Operations
Nothing at this time.

v. Conservation Lands

a. Conservation Lands Strategy Draft

Conservation Lands Technician, Margaret Potter spoke to the drafted Conservation Lands Strategy as required under changes to the CAA.

A Member asked with regard to assessment and maintenance of trails with respect to Ash tree die off. Mr. Lanthier responded that the strategy is a higher-level document that does not address operational items. However, GSCA’s risk management guidelines address these types of situations.

Motion No.:
FA-24-099

Moved By: Tobin Day
Seconded By: Jon Farmer

WHEREAS Ontario Regulation 686/21 – Mandatory Programs and Services Regulation, requires conservation authorities to prepare a Conservation Area Strategy on or before December 31, 2024,

AND WHEREAS GSCA has developed a draft Strategy,

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors direct staff to circulate this Strategy for consultation.

Carried

vi. Forestry

Nothing at this time.

vii. Communications/Public Relations

Nothing at this time.

viii. Education

Nothing at this time.

ix. GIS/IT

Nothing at this time.

x. DWSP

Nothing at this time.

9. New Business

Nothing at this time.

10. CAO’s Report

The CAO, Tim Lanthier, gave an update on recent activities.

Mr. Lanthier and Carl Seider, DWSP Coordinator participated in the Grey County Climate Adaptation working group on October 1st.

Mr. Lanthier participated in a Healthy Lake Huron Steering Committee meeting in Clinton. The committee oversees the Healthy Lake Huron program with funding for Stewardship work through OMAFA and MECP.

There will be an unveiling of the refurbished Eugenia Falls Cenotaph on November 11th. Mr. Lanthier extended thanks and congratulations to Conservation Lands Technician, Margaret Potter on her work to move this project forward.

11. Chair's Report

Vice Chair Dubyk extended her thanks to GSCA staff for their efforts in revitalizing the Eugenia Falls Cenotaph and will be in attendance on November 11th.

12. Other Business

Nothing at this time.

As the Closed Session was no longer necessary, Members moved to amend the agenda to remove the closed session item.

Motion No.: FA-24-100	Moved By: Seconded By:	Tony Bell Tobin Day
--	---	--------------------------------------

THAT the GSCA Board of Directors approve to amend the October 23, 2024, agenda to remove the closed session item.

Carried

13. Resolution to Move into Closed Session

14. Resolution Approving the Closed Session Minutes

15. Next Full Authority Meeting

Wednesday November 27, 2024

16. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:29 p.m.



Nadia Dubyk, Vice Chair

Valerie Coleman
Administrative Assistant