



Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority

Minutes – Board of Directors Meeting

- Date: Friday January 17, 2025, 1:00 PM
- Location: 1078 Bruce Rd 12, Formosa, ON
- Chair: Tom Hutchinson
- Members present: Paul Allen, Larry Allison, Barbara Dobreen, Kevin Eccles, Bud Halpin (virtual), Greg McLean, Mike Niesen, Sue Paterson, Moiken Penner, Jennifer Prenger, Peter Whitten
- Members absent: Steve McCabe, Dave Myette, Bill Stewart
- Staff present: Matt Armstrong, Adam Chalmers, Erik Downing, Janice Hagan, Darren Kenny, Donna Lacey, Mike Oberle, Katie Thomas, Brandi Walter
- Others present: Special guests and members of the public.

Due to technical difficulties, the meeting was called to order at 1:15 PM

1. Land Acknowledgement – read by Chair Barbara Dobreen

We begin our meeting today by respectfully acknowledging the Anishinaabeg Nation, the Haudenosaunee, the Neutral, and the Petun peoples as the traditional keepers of this land. We are committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was amended to include presentation Flood Response update and debrief (Item 9.2).

Motion #G25-01

Moved by Paul Allen

Seconded by Sue Paterson

THAT the agenda for the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority meeting, January 17, 2025, be adopted as amended.

Carried

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest relative to any item on the agenda.

4. Adoption of Minutes

4.1 Authority meeting – November 30, 2024

Motion #G25-02

Moved by Tom Hutchinson

Seconded by Larry Allison

THAT the minutes of the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority meeting, November 21, 2024, be adopted as circulated.

Carried

5. Introduction of guests

Greetings were brought to SVCA from the following dignitaries and special guests:

Ben Lobb, M.P Huron-Bruce Riding

Lisa M. Thompson, M.P.P, Huron/Bruce Riding (in absentia, via correspondence)

Kim Wingrove, CAO, Grey County

Kenneth Craig, Mayor, Municipality of Kincardine

Dave Turton, Mayor, Township of Minto

Luke Charbonneau, Mayor, Township of Saugeen Shores

Mark Goetz, Mayor, Municipality of South Bruce

Angela Coleman, General Manager, Conservation Ontario

Robert Uhrig, Chair, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority

Ed McGugan, Chair, Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, Municipality of Huron-Kinloss

Tim Lanthier, CAO, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority

Phil Beard, General Manager, Maitland Valley Conservation Authority

Chris Cosset, President, Bruce County Federation of Agriculture

Monica Morrison, Bruce County Planning

Chad Richards Nuclear Innovation Institute

Carl Seider, Lead, Drinking Water Source Protection

5.1 Presentation: Director and Staff Recognition

The following Staff were presented service awards:

- 15-Year Service Award: Rene Kleinecke, GIS Coordinator
- 10-Year Service Award: Janice Hagan, Legislative Services Coordinator, Mike Oberle, Environmental Planning Technician
- 5-Year Service Award: Jim Leask, Park Superintendent, Bluffs Campground, Brandi Walter, Environmental Planning Coordinator, Lee Watson, Park Superintendent, Durham Campground

The following Authority Members were presented service awards:

- 10-Year Service Award: Barbara Dobreen, Steve McCabe, Sue Paterson

6. Chair's Address

The following address was given by Chair Dobreen:

As we gather today for Saugeen Conservation's Annual General Meeting, I can't help but reflect on a year defined by perseverance, progress, and adaptation. Despite significant transitions across our organization, Saugeen Conservation has continued to deliver important programs and services to our communities.

Our Environmental Planning and Regulations Department has demonstrated outstanding resilience this year. Permits and planning comments were processed in a timely fashion despite personnel changes. In partnership with municipalities, we completed new floodplain mapping for Saugeen Shores, West Grey, and Huron-Kinloss, laying the groundwork for improved community planning and safety. The department navigated major changes to provincial legislation, including the Conservation Authorities Act, Regulation 41/24, and the Provincial Planning Statement. Draft revisions to the Environmental Planning and Regulations Policies Manual were completed, with public consultation ensuring our processes remain transparent and accountable.

Innovation was a hallmark of this department, with CA Core—a new content management system—developed to efficiently manage digital Planning and Regulation files, ready for implementation in early this year. Accessibility improvements continued, including the development of clearer, AODA-compliant communications. The 293 permits and 367 Planning Act comments reflect the department’s ability to thrive through change.

The Forestry and Lands Department has had a remarkable year, planting over 40,000 trees and selling an additional 22,000, reinforcing our commitment to local environmental improvement and sustainability. Four staff achieved chainsaw certification, which enhances safety and expertise in forest management.

This year also saw the successful opening of exciting new recreational opportunities. Durham Conservation Area hosted a grand opening for its disc golf course and welcomed visitors to winter camping. Saugeen Bluffs held its first annual River Run Canoe and Kayak Races, receiving glowing feedback from participants, while a new orienteering course has been established, adding to its offerings. Additionally, Stoney Island ash tree removal was completed, and Mildmay Carrick and Allan Park reopened, welcoming residents and visitors back to cherished green spaces.

Despite challenges, all campgrounds enjoyed successful seasons, supported by a highly dedicated team. Staff worked tirelessly, particularly in response to a lightning strike at the office, where they rallied to assess and secure the building, and shared the required round-the-clock shifts to maintain operations. We are thrilled to be meeting here at Formosa today with the office fully opened for operations.

The department’s hard work and tenacity were further recognized through successful grant applications that will enable continued enhancements to our lands and services.

The Water Resources Department. Before I speak to the 2024 accomplishments, I would be remiss not to thank Jody Duncan and the Water Resources Team for tirelessly working through the ongoing frazil ice situation in West Grey. It has required countless hours and a coordinated effort with the West Grey staff and contractors to manage this challenge. A Flood Outlook is still in place for West Grey as these cold temperatures continue. We appreciate your continuous effort in mitigating impacts to public safety and keeping information flowing.

Now back to our annual review. The Water Resources team were successful in securing funding through the Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Program for critical projects in 2024, including Paisley Dyke Improvements, tree remediation at the Hanover Dam and Walkerton Flood Control Works, and public safety signage across key sites. Maintenance activities, such as vegetation removal, safety signage installations, and minor repairs, continued to safeguard infrastructure.

The department played an essential role in flood forecasting and monitoring, issuing timely flood messages, performing stream gauge maintenance, and calibrating precipitation gauges.

Notable accomplishments included defining flood damage centres to improve forecasting and updating stream gauge rating curves. Significant investments were made in replacing equipment at the Chesley, Aberdeen, and Ripley stream gauge stations, while the inoperational Greenock station was decommissioned. Saugeen Conservation also released a comprehensive Water Quality Report analyzing data from 2002-2023.

In Corporate Services, we prioritized growth and strategy. Staff pursued professional development in public sector leadership, payroll processing, and accessibility. GIS and IT played a crucial role in supporting the CA Core system's development. Our commitment to improving organizational culture led to a Workplace Culture Review, and a new Pay Policy was implemented, ensuring fairness and alignment with our organizational goals.

A new property guide for the Authority was published, while a document retention strategy was finalized to modernize our operations. Significant GIS updates to our mapping have improved accuracy and accessibility, strengthening our internal systems.

Finally, we welcomed a new General Manager as well as departmental managers for Water Resources, Environmental Planning and Regulations, and Corporate Services, positioning us for strong leadership in the years ahead.

Through every challenge and adjustment, SVCA's staff has remained steadfast in their commitment to their work. Significant changes in personnel and external circumstances could have undermined our efforts, but instead, they highlighted the strength of this organization.

As we look back on this year of transitions, we also look forward with optimism. SVCA has proven its resilience, creativity, and ability to deliver critical programs and services for the communities we serve.

Thank you to our dedicated staff, our Board, and all those in our communities who are committed to ensuring the sustainability of our watershed well into the future.

It has been an honor to serve as Saugeen Conservation's Chair these past two years. I am proud of the progress we have made together and the groundwork we have laid for 2025 and beyond.

We are stronger together; and together we will continue to manage our natural resources to ensure resilient communities in the face of environmental change.

7. General Manager/Secretary Treasurer Address

The following address was given by GM/S-T Erik Downing:

Good afternoon MPs, MPPs, Mayors, Councillors, representatives of many partners and organizations, staff, press, and public attendees,

First off, thank you for being here today. As we look back on the past year, I'd like to start by saying how proud I am to be part of Saugeen Conservation. In 2024 I started as General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer at the SVCA after many years in Environmental Planning and Regulations at the SVCA, and it's been both a challenge and a privilege to work with such a resilient and dedicated team. I can't overstate how much has been accomplished under some pretty unusual circumstances.

The watershed doesn't take a day off, and neither did our staff. We faced record turnover across almost every department this year, with changes at all levels, including new managers and frontline team members. Despite this, the work didn't just get done—it got done well. Permits were issued, trees were planted, flood messages went out on time, and visitors continued to enjoy our conservation areas. Above and beyond a typical year as well the completion of the NWMO Environmental Baseline Monitoring Program at the SVCA brought the SVCA exceptional resources, knowledge, and Data that will assist the work of the SVCA in the for a long time. Conservation Authorities Act 2024 deliverables were also all completed on time. None of that happens without a team that digs in and gets the job done, no matter what challenges come their way.

The lightning strike at our office could have thrown us completely off course, but it didn't. Staff pivoted to working remotely, which isn't always easy or ideal, but the public wouldn't have known the difference. Services continued, deadlines were met, and quality never slipped. That's a testament to the professionalism and dedication of everyone here.

We all know it's been a year of change—new faces, new systems, new challenges—but the core of what we do hasn't changed. Our mission remains to protect and enhance the watershed, and this team has proven they can do that under just about any conditions. I think that says a lot about the people working here and the culture of this organization.

Looking ahead, 2025 marks an extraordinary milestone for Saugeen Conservation: our 75th Anniversary. This July, we will celebrate 75 years of dedication to conservation in the Saugeen Valley watershed. As part of this celebration, we are excited to launch the "Explore SVCA Program," designed to engage our community and raise awareness about the vital conservation efforts happening across the watershed. This program aims to encourage even greater participation and visitation to our conservation areas, highlighting the natural beauty and significance of these lands.

The 75th Anniversary event which will occur in July, will not only honor our history but also spotlight our ongoing projects and future endeavors in water management, land conservation, and environmental planning. It will be a chance for all of us to come together, connect with key stakeholders, and showcase the exceptional work SVCA continues to deliver. I warmly encourage all of you to attend and celebrate this momentous occasion with us.

As I look to the year ahead, I'm excited for what's coming. We've got strong leadership in place across departments, and I have no doubt we'll keep finding ways to improve, innovate, and deliver for the watershed and the people who depend on it.

It's an honor to be part of this team, and I'm looking forward to what we'll achieve together in 2025. Thank you, and let's keep at it.

8. Election of Officers

8.1 Appointment of Chair Pro Tem

Motion #G25-03

Moved by Kevin Eccles

Seconded by Jennifer Prenger

THAT Ed McGugan be appointed as Chair Pro Tem for the purposes of conducting the election of officers for 2025.

Carried

Chair Pro Tem McGugan declared all offices vacant and called for a motion to appoint two scrutineers, in the event of an election count.

8.2 Appointment of Scrutineers

Motion #G25-04

Moved by Paul Allen

Seconded by Barbara Dobreen

THAT Phil Beard and Carl Seider be appointed as scrutineers for the purposes of conducting the election of officers for 2025.

Carried

8.3 Election of Chair

Chair Pro tem McGugan called for nominations for the position of Chair for 2025. Paul Allen nominated Tom Hutchinson. No further nominations were received.

Motion #G25-05

Moved by Barbara Dobreen

Seconded by Greg McLean

THAT the nominations for the position of Chair of the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority for 2025 be closed.

Carried

Tom Hutchinson accepted his nomination and was acclaimed Chair for 2025.

8.4 Election of Vice Chair

Chair McGugan called for nominations for the position of Vice Chair for 2025. Tom Hutchinson nominated Paul Allen. No further nominations were received.

Motion #G25-06

Moved by Sue Paterson

Seconded by Moiken Penner

THAT the nominations for the position of Chair of the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority for 2025 be closed.

Carried

Paul Allen accepted his nomination and was acclaimed as Vice Chair for 2025.

8.5 Election of 2nd Vice Chair

Chair McGugan called for nominations for the position of 2nd Vice Chair for 2025. Jennifer Prenger nominated Greg McLean. There were no further nominations.

Motion #G25-07

Moved by Tom Hutchinson

Seconded by Larry Allison

THAT the nominations for the position of 2nd Vice Chair of the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority for 2025 be closed.

Carried

Greg McLean accepted his nomination and was acclaimed as 2nd Vice Chair for 2025.

8.6 Election of Member-at-Large

As Chair Barbara Dobreen will continue as an accredited Member of the Authority, she will assume the role of Past Chair, eliminating the requirement for an election for the Member-at-large position.

9. New Business

9.1 Formosa Administration Office (verbal report)

Erik Downing, GM/S-T, provided an update to the Board regarding the status of the SVCA administration building following the lightning strike on October 7, 2024. The shattered windows and front door have been replaced, and the panel and internal lighting have been repaired. Inspections, including structural and environmental assessments, have been completed, confirming no evidence of asbestos. Soffit repairs are ongoing. Staff have returned to working in the office.

9.2 Presentation: January 6 – 17 Flood Response update and debrief

Katie Thomas, Manager of Water Resources, delivered a presentation on the flooding event in Durham, Ontario, from January 5 to 11, 2025. The event led to significant frazil ice accumulation, necessitating continuous monitoring at various sites. Katie informed the Board that the SVCA Flood Event Operation Centre effectively managed the emergency flooding situation and noted the success of the close working relationship with municipal staff for an efficient response. Member Eccles proposed an advocacy partnership between SVCA and the Municipality of West Grey to secure provincial funding for dam repairs, aiming to prevent future emergency events.

9.3 GM-2025-01: SVCA Workplan

The GM/S-T presented the SVCA Workplan for 2025 and highlighted that some of the items that have been completed. There was no discussion.

9.4 GM-2025-02 Programs report

There was no discussion on the Programs report.

9.5 Correspondence

- Correspondence from the Municipality of West Grey regarding the decision to discontinue winter operations at the Durham upper dam was noted. The Members discussed collaborating with West Grey staff on provincial negotiations and on drafting a joint letter to the Minister to elevate the concerns with Emergency Measures Ontario.

Motion #G25-08

Moved by Barbara Dobreen

Seconded by Greg McLean

THAT a letter be sent, in collaboration with the Municipality of West Grey, to the Minister of

Environment, Conservation, and Parks, and the Minister of Natural Resources, requesting an urgent meeting, as well as the allocation of necessary provincial resources, to address the frazil ice emergency in Durham.

Carried

- Correspondence from the Ministry of Natural Resources regarding the extension of an EPR fee freeze from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, was noted and filed.
- Correspondence from the Municipality of South Bruce indicating that appointed municipal representative has been directed to vote against the SVCA budget was noted and filed.

9.6 COR-2025-01: 2025 Budget update

Motion #G25-09

Moved by Paul Allen

Seconded by Barbara Dobreen

THAT the apportionment amount of \$2,785,664 for Category 1 operating expenses and capital costs be approved in accordance with Ontario Regulation 401/22, Section 27(4) of the Conservation Authorities Act.

THAT the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority adopt the 2025 Budget in the amount of \$6,592,410 as approved in principle, November 21, 2024; and further

THAT the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer is hereby authorized to notify the member municipalities of the cost apportioning amounts owing; and further

THAT cost apportioning payments shall be due from member municipalities in two equal instalments on March 31 and June 30, 2025, and that late payments shall be subject to the Authority’s standard late payment charge of 1.50% per month thereafter.

A recorded, weighted vote was taken for the 2025 budget with the following results:

Municipality	Director	Vote
Arran-Elderslie	Moiken Penner	In favour
Brockton	Greg McLean	In favour
Chatsworth	Peter Whitten	In favour
Grey-Highlands	Paul Allen	In favour
Hanover	Sue Paterson	In favour
Howick	Mike Niesen	Not In favour
Huron-Kinloss	Larry Allison	Not In favour
Kincardine	Jennifer Prenger	In favour
Kincardine	Bill Stewart	Absent
Minto	Steve McCabe	Absent
Morris-Turnberry	Mike Niesen	Not In favour
Saugeen Shores	Bud Halpin	In favour
Saugeen Shores	Dave Myette	Absent
South Bruce	Mike Niesen	Not In favour
Southgate	Barbara Dobreen	In favour
Wellington North	Steve McCabe	Absent
West Grey	Kevin Eccles	Not In favour
West Grey	Tom Hutchinson	Not In favour

The result of the vote was 69.4% of the weighted average of those present in favour. Therefore, **Motion #G25-09 was carried.**

Carried

9.7 COR-2025-02 -Bylaw Amendments

Amendments to the SVCA Bylaw incorporate updated terminology from Ontario Regulation 402/22 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. These changes are crucial for aligning the bylaws with the revised legislative framework and ensuring compliance with the new regulatory requirements. (Changes to the Bylaws require a 2/3 majority vote.)

Motion #G25-10

Moved by Mike Niesen

Seconded by Barbara Dobreen

THAT the Board of Directors of the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority approve the recommended Administrative Bylaw amendments as presented in the report on January 17, 2025.

Carried

9.8 COR-2025-03: SVCA Committee Appointments

Motion #G25-11

Moved by Barbara Dobreen

Seconded by Jennifer Prenger

THAT Report #COR-2025-03 - SVCA Committee Appointments be deferred to the next scheduled Authority meeting.

Carried

9.9 COR-2025-04: Statutory Administrative Approvals

Motion #G25-12

Moved by Barbara Dobreen

Seconded by Larry Allison

THAT the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority Board of Directors re-affirm for 2025 the Health and Safety Policy; and further,

THAT the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority Board of Directors Re-Affirm for 2025 the Workplace Violence, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment Policy.

Carried

9.10 Appointment of Auditor

Motion #G25-13

Moved by Sue Paterson

Seconded by Greg McLean

THAT Baker Tilly SGB LLP be confirmed as the auditor to the Authority for the year 2025.

Carried

9.11 Appointment of Solicitor

Motion #G25-14

Moved by Kevin Eccles

Seconded by Mike Niesen

THAT Beard Winter LLP, Loucks and Loucks LLP, and Mathews, Dinsdale & Clark LLP be appointed solicitors to the Authority for the year 2025 for general operations, with the option to engage the services of other local solicitors, as necessary.

9.12 EPR-2024-24: Request for endorsement: Permits issued – Matt Armstrong

(Deferred from Authority meeting, November 21, 2024)

Motion #G25-15

Moved by Bud Halpin

Seconded by Barbara Dobreen

THAT SVCA permit applications 24-010, 24-075, 24-237 to 24-255, and 24-257 to 24-262 as approved by staff, be endorsed.

Carried

9.13 EPR-2024-23: Violation Strategy Update

(Deferred from Authority meeting, November 21, 2024)

There was no discussion.

11. Closed Session – to discuss a litigation matter and personal matters about identifiable individuals (Deferred from Authority meeting, November 21, 2024), and to discuss information explicitly supplied in confidence to the Authority by Canada (Federal Government).

Motion #G25-16

Moved by Paul Allen

Seconded by Larry Allison

THAT the Authority move to Closed Session, In Camera to discuss a litigation matter, and information supplied in confidence by the Canadian Federal Government; and further

THAT Erik Downing, Matt Armstrong, Donna Lacey, and Janice Hagan remain in the meeting as required.

Carried

Motion #G25-21

Moved by Barbara Dobreen

Seconded by Moiken Penner

THAT Staff proceed as directed in the Closed Session.

Carried

10. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 PM, following a motion by Peter Whitten and Mike Niesen.

Tom Hutchinson
Chair

Janice Hagan
Recording Secretary