

Grand River Conservation Authority

Report number: GM-03-25-32

Date: March 28, 2025

To: Members of the Grand River Conservation Authority

Subject: Additional Member Appointment, Agricultural Sector Representative

Recommendation:

THAT Report Number GM-03-25-32– Additional Member Appointment, Agricultural Sector Representative be received as information.

Summary:

Earlier this year there was a public posting for an additional member to be appointed to the Grand River Conservation Authority Board as an Agricultural Sector Representative. This posting was also circulated in 2022 and the GRCA Board directed staff to send a letter to the Minister to emphasize the GRCA's support for having agricultural representation on the Board, to provide some information about the work that the GRCA does with and for the agricultural and rural community in the watershed, and to request that an additional member not be appointed at that time as the GRCA Board had several municipally-appointed members who also represented the agricultural sector. With direction from the Board, staff could prepare another letter to be sent to the Minister in response to the new posting.

Report:

In December 2020, the Conservation Authorities Act was updated to include a new provision allowing the Minister to appoint an additional member to the Authority as a representative of the agricultural sector. Under the Act, the agricultural sector representative member is not permitted to vote on: resolutions to enlarge an authority's area of jurisdiction, resolutions to amalgamate an authority with another authority, resolutions to dissolve the authority, or resolutions relating to any budgetary matter. The member's appointment is for a term of up to four years as determined by the Minister and is subject to replacement as determined by the Minister. This member is not counted when determining quorum as that is limited to members appointed by the participating municipalities. The GRCA's By-law reflects the differences for this member as it relates to remuneration, voting limitations, quorum, etc. Regardless of how a member is appointed to the GRCA Board, all members have a fiduciary duty of loyalty and duty of care to the GRCA when performing their board responsibilities.

There was a public posting in early 2022 for an agricultural representative to be appointed at each of the 36 Conservation Authorities, although only four (4) appointments were made at that time. When the posting was circulated, GRCA staff were directed to send a letter to the Minister (Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks at that time) to emphasize the GRCA's support for having agricultural representation on the Board, to provide some information about the work that the GRCA does with and for the agricultural and rural community in the watershed, and to request that an additional member not be appointed at that time as the GRCA Board had several municipally-appointed members who also represented the agricultural sector. This letter to the Minister is included as *Attachment A* for reference. No agricultural sector representative member was appointed to the GRCA Board in response to the 2022 posting.

The Minister has recently posted a new opportunity for an additional member representing the agricultural sector for ten (10) different Conservation Authorities, including the GRCA. The posting is included as *Attachment B* for reference.

In early February 2025, a request was circulated to Board Members on behalf of the Chair inquiring about their agriculture industry experience. Thirteen (13) Board Members responded; six (6) members indicated that they did not have agricultural experience, and seven (7) members indicated that they do have agricultural experience. Of the 26-person Board, 7 members represents over 25% of total board membership with agricultural experience.

At the February 2025 General Membership meeting, correspondence about this matter was received by the Board and is attached for reference as *Attachment C*.

With direction from the Board, staff could prepare a letter to the Minister similar to the one sent in 2022.

Financial Implications:

Not applicable

Other Department Considerations:

Not applicable

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