



Grand River Conservation Authority Minutes - Annual General Meeting

Date:	February 28, 2025
Time:	9:30 am
Location:	Hybrid Meeting of the General Membership GRCA Administration Centre Zoom Virtual Meeting
Members Present	Bruce Banbury, Christine Billings, Ken Yee Chew, Brian Coleman, Kevin Davis, Mike Devine, Jim Erb, Susan Foxtan, Guy Gardhouse, Gord Greavette, Lisa Hern, Daniel Lawrence, Dave Miller, Sandy Shantz, Rob Shirton, Jerry Smith, Shawn Watters, Chris White, Alex Wilson, Pam Wolf
Members Regrets	Gino Caputo, John Challinor II, Doug Craig, Colleen James, Natasha Salonen, Kari Williams
Staff	Samantha Lawson, Karen Armstrong, Beth Brown, Krista Bunn, Joel Doherty, Brandon Heyer, Janet Ivey, Kayleigh Keighan, Katelyn Lynch, Sonja Radoja, Lisa Stocco, Vahid Taleban, Pam Walther-Mabee, Benjamin Cheng, Shari Dahmer, Chris Foster-Pengelly, Louise Heyming, Eric Lalonde, Melissa Larion, Nathan Munn, Eowyn Spencer
Others	MP Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South-Hespeler), MP Brian May (Cambridge), Mayor Dorothy McCabe (Waterloo), Alan Dale, Stacey Kraemer (KPMG)

1. **Call to Order**

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Chair Challinor II sent regrets for the meeting, and Vice-Chair Watters presided as Chair. The meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m.

2. **Certification of Quorum**

The Secretary-Treasurer certified a quorum with more than half of the Members present. A total of 20 Members attended the meeting.

3. **Chair's Remarks**

- The Chair welcomed the Members and guests to the 2025 Annual General Meeting of the Grand River Conservation Authority and thanked everyone for attending.
- The Chair acknowledged that the flags at the administration centre were being flown at half-mast for the day of the Board meeting in honour of a past Board Chair, Jim

Bauer. Mr. Bauer served as the first Chair of the GRCA from 1966 when the Grand Valley Conservation Authority and the Grand River Conservation Commission amalgamated to the organization we know today. He was a long-serving member of the Board, acting as Chair until 1990. On behalf of the GRCA, we share condolences to Mr. Bauer's family.

4. Review of Agenda

25-24

Moved By Jerry Smith

Seconded By Pam Wolf

THAT the agenda for the Annual General Meeting be approved as circulated.

Carried

J.Erb joined the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

5. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests made in relation to the matters to be dealt with.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

25-25

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By Susan Foxtton

THAT the minutes of the General Membership Meeting of January 24, 2025 be approved as circulated.

Carried

7. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

8. Hearing of Delegations

There were no Delegations.

9. Presentations

There were no Presentations.

10. Correspondence

10.1 HFH Inc. re: Concerns regarding delays in GRCA and broader permitting processes (Correspondence and GRCA response)

- D.Miller expressed concern regarding this item, and thanked staff for including their response. He then inquired about legislated response times, and if the consultant's review noted in the Chair's report is a result of this complaint. He also inquired if the consultant's report will come to the Board.

- B.Brown responded, noting that there are legislated timelines regarding notifications for permit responses and an appeal process, and there are best practices in place to respond within timeframes.
- Regarding the consultant's review, B.Brown commented that the review will look at overall process improvements over and above current practices, and noted that there have been other delays in service. Staff anticipate bringing a report to the Board in May or June.

10.2 Waterloo Federation of Agriculture re: Public appointments

- L.Hern requested that staff include this letter in March with the update on the same topic, as it is relevant to the appointment of an agricultural representative. The Chair advised that staff will take that into consideration.

25-26

Moved By Gord Greavette

Seconded By Guy Gardhouse

THAT Correspondence from HFH Inc regarding delays in GRCA permitting processes, and from the Waterloo Federation of Agriculture regarding public appointments from the agriculture sector be received as information.

Carried

11. 1st and 2nd Reading of By-Laws

None.

12. Reports:

12.1 GM-02-25-17 - Report of the Chair

The Chair asked the CAO to summarize the update in J.Challinor's absence. S.Lawson advised that the Report of the Chair contains a summary of items and discussion points since the previous Board meeting.

In addition to the notes in the report, the following additional items were shared :

- On January 28, Samantha Lawson and Sonja Radoja, Manager of Corporate Services attended Hamilton Council to be available for questions regarding the GRCA draft budget and no questions were raised for the GRCA.
- Janet Ivey, Manager of Water Resources, has begun meeting with municipal counterparts to discuss updating the collaborative 2014 Grand River Water Management Plan. The Board will receive a report on the scope and process for the update in the spring.
- Katelyn Lynch, Manager of Water Control Infrastructure, is hosting a Public Safety Around Dams workshop through the Canadian Dam Association. Attendance is limited to watershed municipalities that own or operate dams and will benefit managers and operators involved in decision-making related to risk management and maintenance of public safety at their dams.

- Vahid Taleban, Manager of Flood Operations, is hosting a special virtual flood coordinators meeting on March 4 to discuss potential risks of flooding as a result of snowmelt and spring precipitation, as the northern part of the Grand River watershed has received a significant amount of snow over this winter.

25-27

Moved By Bruce Banbury

Seconded By Kevin Davis

THAT the Chair's Report be received as information.

Carried

12.2 GM-02-25-15 - Conservation Services Update

- L.Heyming provided a presentation on the GRCA's Conservation Services program. The presentation highlighted key programs that promote private land stewardship in the watershed.
- Programs include the Rural Water Quality Program (RWQP), private land tree-planting projects, and promoting stewardship through public engagement and education. Conservation services are Category 2 (municipally requested) programs and services which are provided through agreements with participating municipalities.
- These stewardship programs help to improve and protect water quality, improve soil health and biodiversity, support flood mitigation, and build landscape resilience to climate change. The programs also help meet mutual objectives of shared initiatives such as the Grand River Aquatic Species at Risk Program, and the Priority Watersheds Phosphorus Reduction Program.
- After the presentation, Board members inquired about municipal support for the RWQP, consideration of adding focus on nitrate reduction in certain program areas, and availability of increased funding.
- L.Heyming responded to questions, noting that most municipalities with agreements for these programs have maintained their support over the years, and that any and all funding received would be put to good use.
- K.Davis asked if Board direction was required in terms of placing focus on nitrate reduction, and S.Lawson noted that given the current level of nitrates and rising concern, that it would be a key point of focus as part of the water management plan update staff are currently undertaking.

25-28

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By Rob Shirton

THAT Report Number GM-02-25-15 – Conservation Services Update be received as information.

Carried

12.3 GM-02-25-16 - Cash and Investment Status

There were no comments or questions on this item.

25-29

Moved By Pam Wolf

Seconded By Jerry Smith

THAT Report Number GM-02-25-16– Cash and Investment Status – January 2025 be received as information.

Carried

12.4 GM-02-25-20 - Financial Summary

There were no comments or questions on this item.

25-30

Moved By Chris White

Seconded By Susan Foxtton

THAT the Financial Summary for the period ending January 31, 2025 be approved.

Carried

12.5 GM-02-25-09 - Budget 2025

- The Chair advised that the Budget recommendation is under General Business and asked if there were questions regarding the report and budget package.
- D.Miller asked about the decreased hydro revenue for Conestogo Dam, and S.Radoja confirmed that the dam will be shut down for a period of time for maintenance, and hydro production will resume when the work is complete.

12.6 GM-02-25-10 - Afforestation Services for Spring 2025

There were no comments or questions on this item.

25-31

Moved By Mike Devine

Seconded By Sandy Shantz

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority award the 2025 contract for hand planting of seedlings to Brinkman Reforestation Ltd. in the amount of \$102,700.00 (excluding HST) and a total budget of \$118,105.00 (excluding HST) be approved;

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority award the 2025 contract for hand planting of tall stock to Black River Tree Planting Inc. in the amount of \$59,625.00 (excluding HST) and a total budget of \$68,568.75 (excluding HST) be approved.

Carried

12.7 GM-02-25-12 - Refuse Waste Collection and Recycling Request for Proposals - Agreement Extension

There were no comments or questions on this item.

25-32

Moved By Daniel Lawrence

Seconded By Susan Foxtan

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority extends the current agreement with Wasteco for an additional 2-year term to provide refuse/waste collection and recycling bin services for GRCA's Conservation Areas, Administration Centre, and Nature Centres for the estimated total of \$230,015.54 (excluding HST).

Carried

12.8 GM-02-25-11 - Supply and Delivery of Gasoline and Diesel Fuel - Tender Award

There were no comments or questions on this item.

25-33

Moved By Pam Wolf

Seconded By Lisa Hern

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority award the contract for the supply and delivery of gasoline and fuel to Suncor Energy Products Partnership, for a term of five (5) years starting March 1, 2025, and ending February 28, 2030, for the estimated total of \$747,145.81 (excluding HST) with the option to renew for three (3) additional one (1) year periods.

Carried

12.9 GM-02-25-13 - Septic Pumping and Disposal - Request for Proposal Award

There were no comments or questions on this item.

25-34

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By Christine Billings

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) award the contract for the septic tank pumping and disposal to Egger Enviro. Ltd. And Weber Environmental Services, for a term of three (3) years starting April 1, 2025, and ending March 31, 2028, for the estimated total of \$223,213.21(excluding HST).

Carried

12.10 GM-02-25-14 - Supply and Delivery of Campfire Wood - Request for Quotations

D.Miller inquired about the revenue allocation for this purchase. P.Walther-Mabee noted that there is a small profit made on the sale of the wood within the conservation areas, but there is overhead related to delivering the service, and confirmed that any revenue it would be allocated back to conservation areas program.

25-35

Moved By Chris White

Seconded By Sandy Shantz

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) award the contract for the supply and delivery of campfire wood to McWood Products Inc., for a term of three (3) years starting April 1, 2025 and ending March 30, 2028 for the estimated total of \$676,080.00 (excluding HST).

Carried

12.11 GM-02-25-20 - Current Watershed Conditions

- K.Davis expressed concern for ice jam flooding in the Brantford area and through the watershed, and asked for staff's assessment on the risk of ice jam flooding through March, the communication system, and how staff consider this year in comparison to the ice jam flooding that occurred in Brantford in 2018.
- V.Taleban responded, discussing two components impacting the conditions this year: the depth of the snow, and the amount of water within the snow pack, which is high. The risk for ice jamming is currently moderate and flooding as a result of ice jams can be difficult to predict, however staff are actively monitoring the situation and will continue to do so through the season.
- The GRCA's River Watch program is carefully monitoring the river and seeing a lot of ice movement, and a small jam was identified in Brantford this week (as of February 28).
- In terms of comparators to the 2018 ice jam flooding in Brantford, V.Taleban noted that weather conditions have been different this year, and are not forecast to fluctuate as quickly or as drastically as in 2018. A special flood coordinators meeting is scheduled for March 4, ahead of the anticipated heavy rainfall to ensure watershed CEMCs are as prepared as possible, and the flood notification system will be tested.
- The GRCA will follow its notification process in terms of press releases and issuing of flood notices.

25-36

Moved By Kevin Davis

Seconded By Mike Devine

THAT Report Number GM-02-25-19 – Current Watershed Conditions as of February 18, 2025 be received as information.

Carried

13. Committee of the Whole - Not required.

Not required.

14. General Business

There was no General Business.

14.1 GM-02-25-18 - Report of the Audit Committee

K.Davis shared comments about the Audit Committee meeting, noting that there was good discussion with suggestions made to improve the overall audit process and having appropriate measures in place to mitigate risk.

25-37

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By Kevin Davis

THAT the Chair's Report of the Audit Committee be received and approved.

Carried

14.1.1 Audit Committee Terms of Reference

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

25-38

Moved By Pam Wolf

Seconded By Guy Gardhouse

THAT the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee dated November 22, 2024 be approved and implemented with the updated approval date of February 28, 2025.

Carried

14.1.2 Reserve Movements

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

25-39

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By Bruce Banbury

THAT the Gauge Reserve be increased by \$75,000.

Carried

14.1.3 Policy & Governance

K.Davis shared that the Audit Committee had discussed putting controls in place to measure the performance of the organization as a whole, and have brought this recommendation as this practice has been beneficial in other agencies.

25-40

Moved By David Miller

Seconded By Kevin Davis

THAT Grand River Conservation Authority staff be directed to develop and present to the General Membership, within a reasonable timeframe, a Whistleblower Policy with respect to financial controls, and a system of key performance indicators for the organization as a whole.

Carried

14.2 Approval of Financial Statements and Report of the Auditor

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

25-41

Moved By Pam Wolf

Seconded By Sandy Shantz

THAT the Financial Statements of Grand River Conservation Authority as at December 31, 2024 and the Report of the Auditors thereon be received and approved;

AND THAT the Audited Financial Statements be circulated to all Grand River watershed participating municipalities, posted on the Grand River Conservation Authority website, and submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Carried

14.3 Appointment of Auditors

- D.Miller asked how often this service goes to tender, and if that's something that should be considered.
- S.Radoja noted it has been many years, adding that staff do complete periodic surveys to compare value. Also considered is the expertise provided by KPMG with respect to conservation authority practices, budgets, and legislation.
- K.Davis added that this was also discussed at the Committee level, and it may come back for discussion next year. He noted the high level of detail provided by this firm, including an AI method to review every (non-payroll) transaction.

25-42

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By Chris White

THAT KPMG Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants, be appointed as Auditors for the Grand River Conservation Authority for the year ending December 31, 2025 at a fee not to exceed \$52,800.

Carried

14.4 Presentation of Budget Estimates for the Current Year

There were no comments or questions regarding the final 2025 Budget, and the Secretary-Treasurer conducted a weighted and recorded vote as is required for the final budget.

25-43

Moved By Chris White

Seconded By Pam Wolf

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority 2025 Budget of \$40,029,965 be approved.

Member	Municipality/Group	Weight	Absent	Present	In Favour	Opposed
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Doug Craig	Region of Waterloo	5.0%	5.0%			
Mike Devine	Region of Waterloo	5.0%		5.0%	5.0%	
Jim Erb	Region of Waterloo	5.0%		5.0%	5.0%	
Susan Foxtton	Region of Waterloo	5.0%		5.0%	5.0%	
Gord Greavette	Region of Waterloo	5.0%		5.0%	5.0%	
Colleen James	Region of Waterloo	5.0%	5.0%			
Sandy Shantz	Region of Waterloo	5.0%		5.0%	5.0%	
Natasha Salonen	Region of Waterloo	5.0%	5.0%			
Kari Williams	Region of Waterloo	5.0%	5.0%			
Pam Wolf	Region of Waterloo	5.0%		5.0%	5.0%	
Daniel Lawrence	Haldimand & Norfolk Counties	0.9%		0.9%	0.9%	
Rob Shirton	Haldimand & Norfolk Counties	0.9%		0.9%	0.9%	
John Challinor II	Region of Halton	2.5%	2.5%			
Alex Wilson	City of Hamilton	12.4%		12.4%	12.4%	
Bruce Banbury	County of Oxford	0.8%		0.8%	0.8%	
Gino Caputo	City of Brantford	3.7%	3.7%			
Kevin Davis	City of Brantford	3.7%		3.7%	3.7%	
Christine Billings	City of Guelph	6.8%		6.8%	6.8%	
Ken Yee Chew	City of Guelph	6.8%		6.8%	6.8%	
Guy Gardhouse	Group 1 (E. Garafraxa, Amaranth, Southgate, Melancthon, Grand Valley)	1.1%		1.1%	1.1%	
Lisa Hern	Group 2 (Mapleton, Wellington North)	1.3%		1.3%	1.3%	
Jerry Smith	Group 3 (North Perth, Perth East)	0.4%		0.4%	0.4%	
Shawn Watters	Twp of Ctr Wellington	2.6%		2.6%	2.6%	
Chris White	Group 4 (Erin, Puslinch, Eramosa)	3.0%		3.0%	3.0%	
Brian Coleman	County of Brant	1.5%		1.5%	1.5%	

David Miller	County of Brant	1.5%		1.5%	1.5%	
	Result:	100.0%	26.2%	73.8%	73.8%	0.0%

Carried

14.5 Provision for Borrowing (Pending Receipt of Municipal Apportionment)

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

25-44

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By Pam Wolf

WHEREAS it may be necessary for Grand River Conservation Authority (hereinafter called the "Authority") to borrow money, on an interim basis, to meet the Authority's financial obligations while awaiting payment of apportionment by participating municipalities designated as such under The Conservation Authorities Act, RSO 1990 (hereinafter called "Participating Municipalities");

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT the Authority be authorized to borrow, on an interim basis, a sum or sums not exceeding in the aggregate One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) from the Authority's bank at the said bank's minimum lending rate established from time to time, until the Authority has received payment of apportionment from Participating Municipalities;

AND THAT the Chair or Vice-Chair together with the Chief Administrative Officer or Secretary-Treasurer of the Authority be and are hereby authorized to execute for and on behalf of the Authority, a promissory note or notes for the sum to be borrowed pursuant to this Resolution and to affix thereto the corporate seal of the Authority;

AND THAT the amount borrowed pursuant to this Resolution, together with interest thereon, be a charge upon the whole of the money received or to be received by the Authority by way of apportionment collected from Participating Municipalities when such moneys are received;

AND THAT the Chair or Vice-Chair or the Chief Administrative Officer or Secretary-Treasurer of the Authority be and is hereby authorized and directed to apply, in payment of the moneys borrowed pursuant to this Resolution together with interest thereon, all of the moneys received by the Authority by way of apportionment collected from Participating Municipalities.

Carried

14.6 Confirmation of By-law

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

25-45

Moved By Rob Shirton

Seconded By Gord Greavette

THAT Grand River Conservation Authority Administrative By-law 1-2025 be confirmed.

Carried

15. Appointments to Committees

15.1 Appointment of Audit Committee

The Chair called for current Members to express their intent to remain or step down from the Committee, and all Members opted to continue their participation. No concerns from other Members were raised.

25-46

Moved By Pam Wolf

Seconded By Sandy Shantz

THAT the General Membership appoint Chair Challinor, Vice-Chair Watters, Brian Coleman, Kevin Davis, Susan Foxtan, Chris White, and Pam Wolf to the Audit Committee until the next Annual General Meeting.

Carried

15.2 Appointment of Special Recognition Committee - Not required.

15.3 Appointment of Conservation Ontario Council Representatives

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

24-47

Moved By Gord Greavette

Seconded By Christine Billings

THAT the Chair and the Chief Administrative Officer be appointed as Members of Conservation Ontario Council;

AND THAT the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Secretary Treasurer be appointed as an Alternate Member of Conservation Ontario Council.

Carried

16. 3rd Reading of By-Laws

None.

17. Other Business

None.

18. Closed Meeting

The Chair asked if there were questions regarding the closed item, and seeing that there were none, the Board remained in open session.

18.1 Minutes of the previous closed session

25-48

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By Bruce Banbury

THAT the Minutes of the previous closed session be approved as circulated.

Carried

19. Next Meeting - March 28, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. (Hybrid)

20. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

Moved By Jerry Smith

Seconded By Sandy Shantz

THAT the meeting of the General Membership be adjourned.

Carried

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer