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Town of Aurora

## Memorandum

Councillor's Office

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**Re:** Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority  
Board Meeting Highlights of April 26 and May 24, 2024

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council

**From:** Councillor Michael Thompson

**Date:** June 25, 2024

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### Recommendation

1. That the memorandum regarding Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Board Meeting Highlights of April 26 and May 24, 2024, be received for information.

### Attachments

1. Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Board Meeting Highlights of April 26, 2024
2. Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Board Meeting Highlights of May 24, 2024

## Board Meeting Highlights

April 26, 2024

### Announcements

- a) CAO Rob Baldwin provided an update on a meeting with the City of Orillia, noting topics of discussion included an overview of Bill 229 and *Conservation Authorities Act* changes affecting Orillia. He noted it was a productive meeting and that the conversation is ongoing through a follow-up email from City staff with additional questions.
- b) CAO Rob Baldwin updated on Conservation Ontario's Annual meeting and results of the yearly election, noting the Chair is Chris White, Grand River Conservation Authority; Vice Chairs are Jonathan Scott, Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority and Pat Warren, Kawartha Conservation; and Directors are Brad McNevin of Quinte Conservation Authority, Chandra Sharma of Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and Rob Baldwin.
- c) CAO Rob Baldwin was pleased to advise he attended a meeting between conservation authorities and Minister Graydon Smith, noting it was a great opportunity to meet and engage with the Minister. The meeting focused mainly on the new hazard regulation, and participants were able to provide feedback. Other areas for opportunity were also discussed. CAO Baldwin looks forward to continued dialogue with the Minister and his staff.
- d) CAO Rob Baldwin reminded Board members that nominations for this year's conservation awards open May 1<sup>st</sup> and close June 5<sup>th</sup>. He urged everyone to get their nominations in.

### Presentations:

#### a) 2023 Draft Audited Financial Statements

BDO Canada LLP Partner, Adam Delle Cese, provided an overview of the audit of the Conservation Authority's 2023 draft financial statements for the period ending December 31, 2023. He noted that in BDO's opinion, the financial statements represent fairly the financial position of the Conservation Authority. He advised a clean audit was held and a standard audit report provided.

He reviewed the responsibilities of management and the auditors, as well as the financial statements, year-over-year changes in financial assets, and statements of cashflows.

#### b) 2023 Restoration Program Accomplishments

Manager, Restoration Services, Christa Sharp, shared a presentation on the Restoration Program's 2023 accomplishments, noting that 108 projects were completed across the watershed, including stormwater retrofits, low impact development features, community

action, wetland habitat creation and agricultural projects, all making critical, on-the-ground improvements to the watershed. These projects accomplished over 35 hectares of land being restored, over 3,400 metres of streambank being planted/stabilized, and 65 increases in biodiversity and enhanced pollinator habitat. Over 85 projects for 2024 are well underway, and the Beaverton low impact development project in the Township of Brock and the Vivian Creek wetland and drainage improvements project in the Town of East Gwillimbury for part of her presentation. To view this presentation, please click this link: [2023 Restoration Program Accomplishments](#)

## **Correspondence and Staff Reports:**

### **2023 Audited Financial Statements**

The Board received Staff Report No. 24-24-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's 2023 Draft Audited Financial Statements. The Board approved the 2023 Draft Audited Financial Statements, as well as the Appropriations to and from Reserves as outlined in Schedule 8 – Statement of Continuity of Reserves of the 2023 Draft Audited Financial Statements. The approved 2023 Audited Financial Statements are to be distributed to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Conservation Authority's banker, and be made available on the Conservation Authority's website.

### **2023 Restoration Program Accomplishments**

The Board received Staff Report No. 25-24-BOD regarding an update on the Conservation Authority's Restoration Program and projects.

### **Summary of 2024 Provincial and Municipal Funding Agreements**

The Board received Staff Report No. 26-24-BOD regarding recently secured Provincial and municipal funding.

### **2024 Budget Companion Document**

The Board received Staff Report No. 27-24-BOD regarding the 2024 Budget Companion Document.

### **Confidential Land Matter**

The Board received the presentation regarding a Confidential land matter and approved the recommendations contained within Staff Report No. 28-24-BOD.

For more information or to see the full agenda package, visit [LSRCA's Board of Directors' webpage](#).

## Board Meeting Highlights

May 24, 2024

### Announcements

- a) CAO Rob Baldwin reminded Board members that nominations for this year's conservation awards will close on June 5th and urged members to submit any nominations they may have.
- b) CAO Baldwin advised he has been meeting with Lake Simcoe watershed CAOs. Meetings have been well received and mutually beneficial, with only a few remaining to be held..

### Presentations:

#### a) 2023 Draft Audited Financial Statements

##### a) 2025 Budget Assumptions

General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, Mark Critch, provided a presentation on the proposed 2025 Budget Assumptions, noting the annual budget cycle is starting a little earlier this year as municipal partners are looking to have their budgets completed earlier. Accordingly, staff will be working to accelerate the process to have the Conservation Authority's 2025 budget approved in December 2024. He reviewed the governing principles, the Cost-of-Living Allowance comparators with neighbouring conservation authorities and municipalities, as well as the financial impact of the recommended levy increase. The recommended budget assumptions are summarized as follows:

1. Inflation: up to 2.50% for applicable expenditures (2024: 2.00%);
2. COLA: up to 3.00% (2024: 2.00%) plus applicable step increases;
3. Infrastructure levy for Asset Management: up to 0.50%(2024: 0.50%);
4. Investment in Strategic Priorities: 1.50% (2024: 0.00%);
5. No additional new FTEs in 2025, unless they are fully funded from grants and/or fees; and
6. Municipal Funding Increase (all categories): Up to 2.00% (2024–average Levy increase: 2.00%).

GM Critch advised that next steps in the 2025 budget process include using the Board approved budget assumptions to develop 2025 Budget; hosting virtual financial updates for municipal funding partners; sharing preliminary budgets early to enable coordination with municipal budget cycles, continuing to look for efficiencies and cost savings to support the 2025 Budget,

using predictive information from 2024 forecast to develop 2025 Budget; and 2025 Budget presentations to funding partners as required.

To view this presentation, please click this link: [2025 Budget Assumptions](#)

#### **b) Regulated Areas Mapping Update**

Director, Development Services, Ashlea Brown, together with GIS Coordinator, Darren Campbell, provided an overview of the updated Regulation Mapping, as well as a demonstration of the Conservation Authority's mapping tool. On April 1, 2024, Ontario Regulation 41/24 'Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits' of the *Conservation Authorities Act* came into effect. Specifically, Section 4 of the Regulation outlines specific requirements for mapping regulated areas including:

- Producing regulatory maps and filing digitally at the head office of a conservation authority;
- Having regulatory maps available on a conservation authority's website;
- Annual review of and update to regulation maps;
- Notification to stakeholders, municipalities and the public of significant updates to regulated areas, including making relevant information available online a minimum of 30 days prior to a conservation authority's meeting where the proposed changes are tabled;
- Significant changes noted above promptly updated to the maps.

Updates to regulated areas as defined in the new sections of the *Conservation Authorities Act* and Regulation include:

- A reduction of the regulated areas around wetlands;
- Change in the definition of a watercourse;
- Changes to the setback distance of slope erosion hazards; and
- New shoreline hazard study completed in 2024 to the previous study done in 1981.

Once this new data is available, the Conservation Authority's GIS Department goes through their process of inputting, analysing, visualizing and making accessible all the layers of data; for example, floodplains, shoreline hazards, wetlands, meanderbelts, and apparent valleys. This information is then made available to Conservation Authority staff, municipal partners and the general public.

To view this presentation, please click this link: [Regulation Limit Mapping Update](#)

## **Correspondence and Staff Reports:**

### **2025 Budget Assumptions**

The Board approved Staff Report No. 29-24-BOD regarding the proposed 2025 Budget Assumptions.

### **Regulated Areas Mapping Update**

The Board received Staff Report No. 30-24-BOD regarding the changes to Regulated Area Mapping in accordance with Ontario Regulation 41/24 and proposed protocol for mapping updates. The Board approved updates to the Regulation mapping for screening purposes, both internal and external including public viewing on the Conservation Authority's website, as well as the regulated mapping protocol outlined in the staff report.

### **Summary of Offsetting Program Results – Reconciliation to December 31, 2023**

The Board received Staff Report No. 31-24-BOD regarding a reconciliation of the Conservation Authority's Offsetting Cash in Lieu funds and Key Performance Indicators.

### **Proposed Regulation detailing new Minister's Permit and Review powers under the Conservation Authorities Act**

The Board received Staff Report No. 32-24-BOD regarding the proposed Regulation detailing new Minister's Permit and Review powers under the Conservation Authorities Act (Environmental Registry of Ontario Posting No. 019-8320).

### **Stop Order under Section 30.4 of the *Conservation Authorities Act***

The Board received Staff Report No. 33-24-BOD regarding Stop Order under Section 30.4 of the Conservation Authorities Act and approved the Stop Order procedures outlined within this staff report for implementation effective immediately.

### **Confidential Legal Matter**

The Board received a verbal update on a Confidential legal matter.

For more information or to see the full agenda package, visit [LSRCA's Board of Directors' webpage](#).