

RIDEAU VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
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Hybrid meeting held in-person and electronically

APPROVED MINUTES

Board of Directors **8/23** **Thursday, November 23, 2023**

Present:

Anne Barr	David Brown
Barry Card	Brian Dowdall
Steve Fournier	Mel Foster
Charlene Godfrey	Susan Irwin
Wilson Lo	Shawn Pankow
Angela Pierman	Kristin Strackerjan
Gary Waterfield	Adrian Wynands

Staff: Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, General Manager
Dan Cooper, Director Conservation Lands and Stewardship
Kathy Dallaire, Manager of Finance
Terry Davidson, Director Regulations and Engineering
Marissa Grondin, Executive Assistant
Brian Stratton, Manager of Engineering

Regrets: Jeff Banks Theresa Kavanagh
Morgan Kenny Anne Robinson

Guests: Brent Harbers, South Nation Conservation

Chair Strackerjan called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

1.0 Roll Call

Roll call was conducted at the Rideau Valley Source Protection Authority meeting immediately preceding this meeting and attendance remained unchanged.

2.0 Land Acknowledgement Statement

Chair Strackerjan delivered the Land Acknowledgement statement during the Source Protection Authority meeting.

3.0 Agenda Review

Chair Strackerjan reviewed the Agenda.

Member Brian Dowdall announced the election of Director Steve Fournier as Lanark County Warden for the year 2024 on November 21, 2023. Expressing gratitude, Reeve Fournier extended thanks to Deputy Reeve Dowdall, and the members collectively conveyed their congratulations to him for this notable achievement.

4.0 Adoption of Agenda

Resolutions 1-231123	Moved by:	Brian Dowdall
	Seconded by:	David Brown

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority adopts the Agenda as circulated.

Resolution Carried

5.0 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

6.0 Approval of Minutes of October 26, 2023

Resolution 2-231123	Moved by:	Anne Barr
	Seconded by:	Susan Irwin

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves the Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting #07/23, October 26, 2023, as circulated.

Resolution Carried

7.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising.

8.0 Conceptual Water Budget Update

Brian Stratton, Manager of Engineering, provided an overview of the proposed update to the Conceptual and Tier 1 Water Budget studies for the Mississippi and Rideau watersheds with provincial source protection funding.

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson clarified for a member that a motion to waive RVCA's purchasing policy is not required as the policy allows professional or technical services to be retained from the same consultant if the current supplier has been engaged and has prior knowledge of the project or services and it is determined to be in the best interest of the RVCA or project to retain the services of the same consultant.

A member inquired about the timeline of the project, noting that the last update was 15 years ago, and questioned if this is the typical timeframe. Mr. Stratton clarified that the project aligns with the directors' technical rules, which have seen multiple updates since 2006; however, they don't stipulate the frequency of updates. He highlighted that the 2007 study relied on historical data and didn't account for climate change, while the new study will incorporate current climate data. Responding to the query about the trigger or timeline for the next update, Mr. Stratton outlined various scenarios, including potential reservoir lake droughts, to anticipate and prepare for different outcomes. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson added that all technical work initially completed as part of the Drinking Water Source Protection program was fully funded by the province and only recently has the province provided additional funding to begin updating these studies.

In response to a member's question, Mr. Stratton clarified that the study covers both the Rideau and Mississippi watersheds as the two conservation authorities are paired together as a Source Protection Region.

Resolution 3-231123

Moved by: Adrian Wynands
Seconded by: Shawn Pankow

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves retaining Morrison Hershfield Limited and Geofirma Engineering Ltd to initiate updating the Conceptual and Tier 1 Water Budget Studies for the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Region to an upset limit of \$100,000.

Resolution Carried

9.0 Updated Purchasing Policy

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, General Manager, presented an updated purchasing policy for consideration, highlighting any significant changes from the previous policy.

A member expressed support for the new policy and asked if it would be reviewed within a certain timeframe. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson thanked the member and indicated that following a recommendation from the Board last month, staff are now adding a review period to all new or updated policies. Page 1 of the updated purchasing policy indicates it would be reviewed every 5 years.

A member inquired when a director would need to make a purchase of \$10,000 as allowed for under the policy. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson clarified that under the policy a director may only approve a purchase up to \$5,000 if it is not in the budget and that purchases up to \$10,000 are items included in the approved budget. This structure allows Directors to move forward with priorities outlined in the budget without requiring further signoff from the General Manager which supports efficiency within the organization.

Resolution 4-231123

Moved by:

Steve Fournier

Seconded by:

Susan Irwin

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves the attached updated Purchasing Policy to take effect January 1, 2024.

Resolution Carried

10.0 Financial Reports for the Period Ending September 30, 2023

Kathy Dallaire, Manager of Finance, reviewed the financial reports for the period ending September 30, 2023 including a Statement of Operations, a side-by-side format of the Statement of Operations, and a Balance Sheet. Ms. Dallaire also noted a typo in the staff report, correcting the forecasted capital expenditures to be \$1.159 million over the 2023 budget, not \$571,000.

There were no questions.

Resolution 5-231123

Moved by:

David Brown

Seconded by:

Kristin Strackerjan

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approve the Revenue and Expenditure Reports and Balance Sheet for the period ending September 30, 2023.

Resolution Carried

11.0 2024 Draft Budget

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson reminded members of the budget process and highlighted a new section in the budget that was added to provide revenue breakdown based on provincial program categories to comply with new legislative requirements taking effect January 1. Additionally, she highlighted the attached annual workplan, designed to accompany the budget by outlining 2024 project priorities and offering context to the budget. Kathy Dallaire, then indicated that the Draft Operating Budget remained consistent with the preliminary version presented in October while the Draft Capital

Budget included an additional expenditure for the required demolition of a building.

A member expressed support for the budget and raised a question about the replacement of a furnace at Foley Mountain Conservation Area. Dan Cooper, Director of Conservation Lands, explained that the furnace, situated in the Interpretive Centre, currently uses propane but that there is a desire to switch to electric. The member asked that green fuel sources be considered when heating systems are being replaced. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson indicated that staff would explore options before an RFP is issued.

A member inquired about the Levy chart, asking why the minimum levy had not been increased for 2024. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson explained that in recent years the minimum levy had been increased by \$100 annually to ensure it was at least covering the cost of those municipalities having a member on the Board. However, those municipalities have chosen to leave their seat vacant on the Board this term after not being permitted to appoint a citizen representative to the Board, so staff are recommending that the minimum levy not be increased for 2024.

A member inquired how a municipality qualifies for the minimum levy. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson explained that municipalities who are charged the minimum levy are those that have such a small area in the watershed that their assessment-based levy allocation would be below what the minimum levy is. There are two such municipalities in the Rideau watershed.

A member expressed appreciation for the annual work plan being part of the budget, suggesting it as a regular feature. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson agreed, mentioning that the work plan is included each year with the budget, but it's new to this board as it wasn't ready last month when the preliminary budget was presented. She added that the work plan provides a more accessible breakdown of the budget, clarifying where the money is allocated.

Chair Strackerjan agreed with the members' comments on the work plan, and Ms. Casgrain-Robertson stated that she would convey the compliments to the RVCA graphic designer, Regan van Dusen.

Resolution 6-231123

Moved by:

Adrian Wynands

Seconded by:

Shawn Pankow

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves the attached 2024 Draft Budget, Levy Apportionment sheet and Workplan for circulation to member municipalities and posting on RVCA's website.

Resolution Carried

12.0 Activity Report: October to November

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, General Manager, provided an overview of program delivery, operations, events, and news items for October and November.

A member expressed surprise that the Yellow Iris is classified as an invasive species. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson acknowledged that it is considered invasive and is especially problematic near watercourses, unlike the native purple iris. The member then brought up discussions at the last Lanark County Council meeting asking what can be done about phragmites. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson clarified that RVCA has not been widely involved in phragmites removal due to its complexity but could refer municipalities to other groups who are working on it including the Invasive Species Centre and Nature Conservancy Canada.

A member relayed that the Hearts Desire Community indicated that the RVCA removed Japanese knotweed along the Jock River a few years ago and that it has now returned. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson explained that RVCA is not responsible for invasive species removal but does organize removal events from time to time and that she will let monitoring staff know about the reappearance in that area.

13.0 Meetings

- a) Eastern Ontario General Managers Meeting: October 27, 2023
- b) General Managers Meeting: October 30, 2023
- c) Perth Council Presentation: November 7, 2023
- d) Clarence Rockland Council Presentation: November 8, 2023
- e) Executive Committee Hearing Training: November 14, 2023
- f) Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy Meeting: Nov 17, 2023

Upcoming

- g) General Managers Meeting: December 4, 2023
- h) Eastern Ontario Finance Meeting: December 4, 2023
- i) Conservation Ontario Council Meeting: December 11, 2023
- j) Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation Meeting: December 13, 2023
- k) Conflict Resolution Training: January 16 to 18, 2024
- l) ROMA Conference: January 21-23, 2024

14.0 Member Inquiries

A member noted Red Pine removal up on Old Kingston Road at Mill Pond Conservation Area and asked if the RVCA received revenue for it. Dan Cooper responded that the majority of harvesting on RVCA property occurs in plantations established in the 1970s and 1980s and that professional foresters manage the process and RVCA is compensated for the harvesting.

The member also asked if RVCA was involved in the Westport Class Environmental Assessment (EA) taking place in relation to their municipal sewage system. Terry Davidson confirmed that Brain Stratton has been engaged in the process.

A member inquired about the RVCA's awareness of a proposed battery storage site in Merrickville-Wolford. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson responded that the RVCA was not aware prior to notices for public meetings being sent to residents but have since learned of multiple proposed sites across eastern Ontario, some in the Rideau watershed. Glen McDonald, Director of Science and Planning, has reached out to the company to identify other sites and enable staff to begin examining mapping. The RVCA aims to establish open communication with the proposed company. Another member mentioned that there are two selected sites for South Frontenac. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson took note of the information.

15.0 New Business

16.0 Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m. on a resolution by Charlene Godfrey which was seconded by Wilson Lo.

Kristin Strackerjan
Chair

Marissa Grondin
Recording Secretary

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson
General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer