

GREY SAUBLE CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES

Full Authority Board of Directors
Wednesday, April 28, 2021, at 1:15 p.m.

The Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors meeting was held via the internet on the meeting application, WebEx.

1. Call to Order

Chair Scott Greig called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

Directors Present: Chair Scott Greig, Vice Chair Andrea Matrosovs, Dwight Burley, Cathy Moore Coburn, Ryan Greig, Harley Greenfield, Marion Koepke, Cathy Little, Scott Mackey, Paul McKenzie, Paul Vickers

Regrets: Cathy Little

Staff Present: CAO Tim Lanthier, Administrative Assistant Valerie Coleman, Manager of Information Services Gloria Dangerfield, Manager of Financial and Human Resources Service Alison Armstrong, Forestry Coordinator Mike Fry, Manager of Environmental Planning MacLean Plewes

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

The Directors were reminded to disclose any pecuniary interest that may arise during the course of the meeting. No disclosures of pecuniary interest were expressed at the time.

3. Call for Additional Agenda Items

None at this time.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Motion No.:
FA-21-050

Moved By: Cathy Moore Coburn
Seconded By: Dwight Burley

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the agenda of April 28, 2021.

Carried

5. Approval of Minutes

Motion No.:
FA-21-051

Moved By: Marion Koepke
Seconded By: Harley Greenfield

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the Full Authority minutes of March 24, 2021.

Carried

6. Business Out of Minutes

Noting at this time.

7. Consent Agenda

Motion No.:
FA-21-052

Moved By: Dwight Burley
Seconded By: Paul Vickers

THAT in consideration of the Consent Agenda Items listed on the April 28, 2021, agenda, the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors receives the following items: (i) Environmental Planning - Section 28 Permits – March 2021; (ii) Administration - Receipts & Expenses – March 2021; (iv) Conservation Ontario – April Agenda; (vi) Recent Media Articles

Carried

8. Deputation

i. Mike Konopka – GSCA TD Investment Update and Review

Mike Konopka from TD Wealth made a presentation to the Board regarding GSCA's investment portfolio. Mike explained the portfolio's current market value, its performance, and history. Despite a low growth year in 2020, GSCA's portfolio has an average return rate of 4.6%. This is expected to increase with the economic bounce back from COVID.

A question was asked about the fees and expenses to manage the portfolio. Mike outlined the tiered fee schedule and non-profit discount. Currently the fee for managing GSCA's portfolio is an average of .99%.

Mike gave a detailed summary of the portfolio's asset mix. It is considered a balanced portfolio with the largest percentage invested in fixed assets.

The TD North American Sustainability Strategy was also discussed as an option for the Board to consider in the future.

ii. Nancy Brown – Inglis Falls Arboretum Alliance (IFAA)

Nancy Brown, Chair presented a brief history of the Arboretum and an overview of a new project, funded in part by TD Friends of the Environment.

The IFAA has secured a grant through the TD Friends of the Environment to fund a portion of a 2-part project to complete the planting of all tree species native to Grey Bruce, and to install signage for the trees in both sections of the Arboretum.

Member Paul McKenzie left the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

The IFAA has ordered most of the species they are looking for, attempting to purchase locally if possible. They will be starting to plant this May/June and hope to be able to invite volunteers to assist if possible, under the present health restrictions.

Having conducted extensive research on informational signage used at other parks and arboretums, IFAA intends to incorporate several styles of signs depending on location. In addition to including the tree's common, family, and botanical names, they have approached local first nations and metis communities to collaborate in adding traditional knowledge and medicinal uses of trees.

IFAA have collaborated with the Grey Sauble Conservation Foundation to create signage for the Annual Memorial Trees planted throughout the Arboretum.

9. Business Items

i. Administration

a. Signing Officer Update

CAO, Tim Lanthier spoke to the need to formally update the list of those staff and Board Members authorized to sign on behalf of GSCA. Tim noted that he added a section giving Departmental managers the authority to sign standard or minor agreements for their respective departments.

Motion No.:
FA-21-053

Moved By: Cathy Moore Coburn
Seconded By: Paul Vickers

THAT effective April 28th 2021, the signing authorities for Grey Sauble Conservation Authority will be as follows:

**Section 28 Permits – MacLean Plewes, Tim Lanthier, and John Bittorf;
Financial – signing authorities for cheques – Scott Greig, Andrea Matrosovs, Tim Lanthier, Gloria Dangerfield, and John Bittorf;
Agreements that bind the Authority (licenses, leases, MOU's, etc.) – Tim Lanthier, Gloria Dangerfield;
Standard, Minor Agreements may be signed by the relevant manager for their respective department.**

Carried

b. 2021 Insurance Premiums Update

CAO, Tim Lanthier provided an update on GSCA's insurance premiums for 2021 and noted that on average GSCA will see a 24% increase. GSCA's umbrella, general liability, errors & omissions, and directors & officers policies represent the greatest increase.

According to GSCA's provider, Conservation Authorities are no longer considered low risk. This is based on recent and ongoing large lawsuits, and an increasingly litigious society.

This increase will have a budgetary impact. The CAO will report back in the 3rd or 4th Quarter as to how the shortfall will be funded.

Member Paul McKenzie rejoined the meeting at 2:23 p.m.

c. Conservation Authorities Act Amendments

CAO, Tim Lanthier provided the Board with an update regarding CAA Amendments and additional proclamations. Conservation Ontario (CO) has put together a table outlining all of the changes to the Act and detailing those changes that have been proclaimed and those yet to be proclaimed.

GSCA submitted a letter to Minister Yurek noting that GSCA utilizes the representation by population method for determining membership as presented in the Conservation Authorities Act. Staff have sent letters to Municipalities to inform them that representatives to the GSCA Board must be municipal councillors and that the term limit for the Chair & Vice-Chair is a maximum of two-years. Staff will be updating the Administration By-Law and bringing forward to the Board in May.

Staff will be updating Section 28 policies and the fee schedule to reflect MZO related permits.

On behalf of GSCA and CO, Tim asked the board to endorse CO's Accountability and Transparency Initiative which will include updates to GSCA Administration By-Laws, supporting CO on proactive reporting on Accountability and Transparency priorities, and supporting CO on promotion and demonstration of results.

Motion No.:
FA-21-054

Moved By: Dwight Burley
Seconded By: Harley Greenfield

WHEREAS the provincial government has passed legislative amendments related to the governance of Conservation Authorities;

AND WHEREAS the Conservation Authorities remain committed to fulfilling accountable and transparent governance;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority endorse the three key actions developed by the Conservation Ontario Steering Committee to update CA Administrative By-laws, to report proactively on priorities, and to promote/demonstrate results;

AND THAT staff be directed to work with Conservation Ontario to implement these actions and to identify additional improvements and best management practices.

Carried

The Board recessed from 2:36 – 2:44 pm.

ii. Water Management
Nothing at this time.

iii. Environmental Planning
a. Planning Department Service Interruption and Recovery

CAO, Tim Lanthier updated the Board on the current service interruption in the planning department, the interim plan, and the plan for recovery.

Tim explained that due to significant staffing changes, the GSCA Environmental Planning Department is operating with two experienced staff instead of five. This combined with onboarding of new staff and ongoing high levels of Planning Act and permit applications and property inquiry requests, it is not possible for the Department to continue to offer a full level of service. As such, the Department will be experiencing a service interruption until the Department is able to recover. This interim plan includes reallocating staff resources from some other departments, a prioritisation on select functions, a redirection of all inquiries to an electronic format, and the creation of an online form for submitting inquiries with an online permit application form coming soon. A notice with information regarding the disruption and links to allow the public to access information has been posted online and embedded in email auto-responses, and the GSCA phone system message has been changed to direct the public to the website.

Staff have been working to fill the vacancies within the Department. One new staff person started on April 26th, an additional staff person will start in mid-May. Staff will be interviewing shortly for the final position. However, it will take time for new staff to get up to speed.

It was noted that the current situation has led to GSCA investigating how GSCA compares to other conservation authority planning departments. Based on preliminary research, it appears that GSCA is in the top ten of CAs for total number of applications and in the bottom ten in resources available, based on population. Staff will investigate changes necessary to continue to provide a high-level of service under burgeoning workloads and will bring forward an options report to the Board.

The Board had some questions regarding the interruption of service and recommended that staff communicate with member Municipal Building Departments. Additionally, the Environmental Planning Department and its staff were commended on the hard work that they are doing, especially under difficult circumstances.

Staff will inform the Board when the department is running at full capacity.

iv. Conservation Lands

Nothing at this time.

v. Forestry

a. Ash Management Report

Forestry Coordinator, Mike Fry, spoke with respect to the provided report and recommendations on how GSCA is managing Ash trees on its properties. In response to questions asked about the Forestry department's method of dealing with Ash trees, which are at risk due to the Emerald Ash Borer, staff brought four options to the Forestry Committee in March; Business as Usual (Current Approach), Target Removal of Ash During Normal Marking Activities, Focus Marking Activities on Stands with Large Components of Ash, or Target Marking Activities Strictly on Ash Trees. Staff have recommended the Target Removal of Ash During Normal Marking Activities.

Staff want to ensure that the focus of management efforts do not lie solely with the dollar value of trees. It was noted that fallen trees create habitat and add nutrients to the soil. There is risk in opening up too much of the canopy as this can encourage an increase in new Ash growth, invasive species, and other undesirable species taking hold and creating

problems in the future. In addition, staff need to consider the optics of large-scale removal of trees from single areas.

Motion No.:
FA-21-055

Moved By: Dwight Burley
Seconded By: Cathy Moore Coburn

WHEREAS Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) owns and manages over 28,000 acres of land comprised of 209 individual properties organized into 79 groupings;

AND WHEREAS, GSCA manages nearly 13,000 acres of forested area to improve forest health and maintain diversity, with revenues used to offset the operating expenses of the Forestry department and GSCA;

AND WHEREAS, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive insect that is quickly spreading throughout Ontario, with few known predators;

AND WHEREAS, staff have identified the need to modify the approach to managing ash species within GSCA forested properties in light of EAB;

AND WHEREAS, the GSCA Forestry Committee has received this report and have recommended that the GSCA Full Authority Board of Director's receive it;

THAT the Board of Director's approve option B - Target Removal of Ash during Normal Marking Activities.

Carried

b. Forestry Tendering Policy

Forestry Coordinator, Mike Fry, presented an updated version of the Forestry Tendering Policy. Staff have made efforts to make the tendering process less cumbersome and more effective in garnering appropriate bids.

Motion No.:
FA-21-056

Moved By: Ryan Greig
Seconded By: Andrea Matrosovs

WHEREAS Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) owns and manages over 28,000 acres of land comprised of 209 individual properties organized into 79 groupings;

AND WHEREAS, GSCA manages nearly 13,000 acres of forested area to improve forest health and maintain diversity, with revenues used to offset the operating expenses of the Forestry department and GSCA;

AND WHEREAS, GSCA maintains and follows a Wood Products Tendering Policy, which provides direction for the sale of wood products from GSCA lands;

AND WHEREAS, the GSCA Forestry Committee has received this report and have recommended that the GSCA Full Authority Board of Director's receive it;

THAT the Board of Director's accept and approve the updates to the Wood Products Tendering Policy.

Carried

vi. Communications/Public Relations

Nothing at this time.

vii. Education

a. Day Camp Update

The Manager of Information Services, Gloria Dangerfield, updated the Board with regard to GSCA Summer Day Camp. With ongoing COVID-19 safety measures in mind, staff have evaluated the benefits and risks of running a day camp. Going ahead with planned numbers presented obstacles that could not be overcome. Running at half capacity would not be economically feasible. In addition, staff learned that GSCA's insurance carrier would not cover claims resulting from COVID-19 exposure. After careful consideration staff recommended cancelling the 2021 summer day camp program. The program will be re-instated in 2022.

viii. GIS/IT

a. Capital Spending Update

The Manager of Information Services, Gloria Dangerfield, spoke to the provided report regarding the need to spend additional funds to replace one of GSCA's server units. Due to the current pandemic, there is a shortage of electronic equipment. In light of this, staff acquired quotes for a new server and were only able to find one within the budgeted amount. Staff purchased this unit to ensure fulfilling capital needs. However, the unit requires additional software and memory to meet GSCA's system requirements.

Prior to being placed into full service, this unit be utilized to run a backup test in case of security breach as an essential component in GSCA's Business Continuity Plan.

Staff requested approval to access funds from the IT Reserves to cover the cost of the additional software and memory for the new unit.

Motion No.:
FA-21-057

Moved By: Marion Koepke
Seconded By: Scott Mackey

WHEREAS Grey Sauble Conservation Authority budgeted \$6000 to acquire a new network server in 2021;

AND FURTHER WHEREAS the existing server is now 11 years old and overdue for renewal under our asset management plan;

AND FURTHER WHEREAS several factors, including component shortages have increased prices;

AND FURTHER WHEREAS the server with required software and additional memory will cost \$1700 above the budgeted amount;

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority approve spending an additional \$1700, above the budgeted \$6000, for the purchase of a new replacement server.

Carried

ix. Operations

Nothing at this time.

x. Drinking Water Source Protection & Risk Management

Nothing at this time.

10. CAO's Report

The CAO gave an update on operations amid the current Stay-at-Home order. Staff are continuing to work remotely until at least May 20th. The situation will be reassessed at that time. Field work is continuing to be carried out in line with Provincial restrictions and internal health and safety plans. All office staff are working remotely with the exception of periodic access to the office to allow for working remotely. As curbside pickup is currently permitted, GSCA is able to move forward with pre-order tree sales. This opportunity did not exist in spring 2020.

Tim noted that parking revenue for 2021 Q1 is up 500% from previous year Q1 amounts. This is mainly attributed to the success of GSCA's new Member's Pass, with over 300 sold for 2021 to date, the new \$10 day pass rate, and the general increase in use. Once again there is a marked increase in attendance and the revenue earned from parking will provide much needed resources to maintain GSCA conservation areas and their infrastructure.

Tim, along with Chair Greig and Vice Chair Matrosovs, attended the Conservation Ontario's Annual General Meeting and regular Council Meeting on April 12th. CO acclaimed Andy Mitchel as the new Chair. Staff will post the Conservation Ontario Agenda package in the Board Portal for reference.

In a continuing effort to locate cost saving opportunities staff are investigating the potential for a less expensive communication system and the replacement or elimination of the current postage machine.

Tim provided an update on the March 22, 2021 Judicial Review between applicant Tom LaForme and the Town of South Bruce Peninsula. Given the expedited timelines, the judicial review hearing date and the provision of a decision were expedited. The judicial panel has ordered that GSCA's permit be quashed and sent back to GSCA for re-consideration. The reasons for the decision have not yet been released. Staff are waiting for the panel to circulate their results which may occur by June 30, 2021.

Some staffing updates, the Stewardship Technician, Keith Reid and the Intermediate Planner, Olivia Sroka, have both started. The interviews for the Watershed Planner position have completed with an offer having been extended and accepted. Additionally, a Forest and Trails Technician contract position is being advertised to cover a maternity leave.

Conservation Ontario has provided an overview of the Federal Budget and there may be opportunities for funding. Staff will update the Board.

Tim had the opportunity to give an interview to On the Bay magazine regarding watershed health and monitoring.

11. Chair's Report

Chair Greig commended GSCA staff on their work in getting properties open and ready for the public and for the maintenance in keeping them looking great.

Member Scott Mackey left the meeting at 3:55.

In speaking with the CAO, Tim Lanthier, Chair Greig would like to make staff and the Chairs available for deputation to GSCA watershed municipalities. If any member municipalities would like an update or to hear from GSCA please reach out.

12. Other Business

Nothing at this time.

13. Closed Session

i. **Approval of Closed Session Minutes**

Nothing at this time.

14. Next Full Authority Meeting

i. Wednesday May 26th, 2021

15. Adjournment

Motion No.:

FA-21-058

THAT this meeting now adjourn.

Moved By:

Seconded By:

Cathy Moore Coburn

Dwight Burley

Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 p.m.



Scott Greig, Chair



Valerie Coleman
Administrative Assistant