

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, May 15, 2025

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Boardroom
Morrison Dam Conservation Area

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Ray Chartrand, Adrian Cornelissen, Steve Herold, Jaden Hodgins, Dave Jewitt, Dave Marsh, Wayne Shipley, Marissa Vaughan

DIRECTORS ABSENT

Joey Groot

STAFF PRESENT

Elizabeth Balfour, Christie Brown, Andrew Bicknell, Geoff Cade, Tina Crown, Abbie Gutteridge, Davin Heinbuck, Brian Horner, Daniel King, Erik Strahl, Mari Veliz

OTHERS PRESENT

Adam Skillen, *Skillen Investment Management*

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ray Chartrand called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m., welcomed everyone in attendance, and read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION #BD 34/25

Moved Dave Jewitt

Seconded by Marissa Vaughan

“RESOLVED, THAT the agenda for the May 15, 2025 Board of Directors Meeting be approved.”

Carried.

DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest at this meeting or from the previous meeting.

DISCLOSURE OF INTENTION TO RECORD

None.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES**MOTION #BD 35/25**

**Moved by Steve Herold
Seconded by Jaden Hodgins**

“RESOLVED, THAT the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on April 17, 2025, and the motions therein be approved as amended.”

Carried.

BUSINESS OUT OF THE MINUTES

None.

PRESENTATION

Adam Skillen, Skillen Investment Management, presented an update on the investment portfolio. It continues to do well, despite a very uncertain first half of the year. Volatility in the markets has caused several short term downturns, but the ABCA portfolio has returned to where it was and is climbing again. As usual, Adam noted that they always continue to shift back toward the original targets of 35% for equities and 65% for bonds. There has been some minor deviation from these targets, but not a significant amount.

PROGRAM REPORTS**1. (a) Development Review**

Andrew Bicknell, Senior Regulations Coordinator, presented the Development Review report pursuant to Ontario Regulation Ontario Regulation 41/24 *Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits*. Through the application process, proposed developments within regulated areas are protected from flooding and erosion hazards. Staff granted permission for 8 *Applications for Permission* and 12 *Minor Works Applications*.

(b) Violation/Appeals Update

Andrew Bicknell provided a brief update regarding a violation from last year that involved a large amount of fill being dumped along the lake bank. Charges were laid, and that case is before the courts. There was a recent court appearance, and the next will be in September. Staff are hopeful that a resolution can be reached by that time.

MOTION #BD 36/25

**Moved by Wayne Shipley
Seconded by David Marsh**

“RESOLVED, THAT the Board of Directors affirm the approval of applications as presented in Program Report # 1 – a) Development Review and receive the verbal Violations and Appeals update as presented.”

Carried.

2. Appointment of Risk Management Official/Inspector

Elizabeth Balfour, Drinking Water Source Protection Co-Supervisor, reminded the Board of Directors that, under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*, municipalities are able to enter into agreements with Source Protection Authorities for the enforcement of Part IV of the Act. Seven member municipalities have entered into this agreement in this Source Protection Region. As the Conservation Authority serves as the SPA under regulation 284/07 of the Act, ABCA is ultimately responsible for appointing the Risk Management Officials (RMOs) and Risk Management Inspectors (RMIs). Recently, Ellen Westelaken has completed the mandatory RMO/RMI training provided by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks. Therefore, staff recommend that she be appointed as RMO/RMI for the ABCA.

MOTION #BD 37/25

**Moved by Marissa Vaughan
Seconded by Jaden Hodgins**

“RESOLVED, THAT the appointment of Ellen Westelaken as Risk Management Official (RMO) and Risk Management Inspector (RMI) as required under Sections 48 (1-3) of the *Clean Water Act, 2006* be approved, and

“FURTHER, THAT a certificate of appointment be issued for Ellen Westelaken as require by Section 48(3) of the Act.”

Carried.

3. Update on Response to Potential Spills

Mari Veliz, Healthy Watersheds Manager, provided the Board of Directors with a brief update regarding several fish die offs in Lake Huron. She noted that they can be naturally occurring, but there can also be other causes. These events are of real concern to watershed residents, and the small amount of the ABCA budget provides some capacity for staff to respond. These events (some considered “spills”) may warrant a Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks response or investigation; however, they sometimes ask local conservation authority staff to provide some assistance. In general, the response of the conservation authority is one of communication and education. Earlier in May, Tim Cumming, ABCA Communications Coordinator, facilitated messaging about these events, and provided information on the best way for the community to report them to relevant agencies.

MOTION #BD 38/25

**Moved by Wayne Shipley
Seconded by Jaden Hodgins**

“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors receives the report update on Response to Potential Spills for information as presented.”

Carried.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Mari Veliz and Rosalind Chang, Healthy Watersheds Technologist, presented on some of the upcoming efforts by the Healthy Watersheds team, which lean on areas where community support is present. They have applied for funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada for several projects in the Old Ausable Channel (OAC), which is a priority area in Ontario due to its unique habitat. Staff are also working on another project at the Huronview Demonstration Farm with **Ontario Farmland Trust** (ask Mari) to enhance some of the tile drainage work that has already been demonstrated and monitored there.

MOTION #BD 39/25

Moved by David Marsh

Seconded by Wayne Shipley

“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors receive the presentation *Healthy Watersheds Update: Leaning into Community Interests* as presented.”

Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

- a) Reference: Salt Management resolution from South Huron
File: A.5.5
Brief: A notice from the Municipality of South Huron noting that they passed a resolution to support the Town of Georgina regarding salt management.
- b) Reference: 2025 Central Huron Donation Fund Application
File: A.5.5
Brief: ABCA Education staff applied for, and were successful in obtaining, a grant from the Municipality of Central Huron for \$3,500 to be used to install a Little Free Library at Clinton Conservation Area, and to run an Oaks and Acorns program at Clinton Conservation Area.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Davin Heinbuck, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer reminded Board members that ABCA staff are always looking for opportunities to speak to our member Municipality councils, and if there are topics that interest them to please let us know.
2. Davin Heinbuck informed the Board that a joint tour between ABCA and Maitland Valley Conservation Authority is being planned, specifically for our local MPPs. The focus will be on drainage and how it ties into the Healthy Lake Huron program.
3. **OMERS DISCUSSION**
Davin Heinbuck reported that the Management Team has been exploring the option of joining the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System. Until now ABCA has had a good Registered Retirement Savings Plan with an 8% matching plan. However, in recent years it has been noticed the not belonging to OMERS has negatively affected our ability to attract and maintain staff. Neighbouring conservation authorities and municipalities have made OMERS available to staff, which has put us at a competitive disadvantage locally when hiring prospective employees. The ABCA Management Team has had a visit from OMERS to learn more about the program. Of note, they will allow an organization to join the plan, but give the option to current staff on whether or not they want to personally join. Some current staff may wish to stay with ABCA's current RRSP program, and this would allow them to do so. Should ABCA join OMERS, it would require all future staff who are eligible to join.

Directors had a brief discussion, and all saw the benefit of moving to OMERS going forward. There was some brief discussion as to whether the ABCA RRSP plan should change to be competitive with OMERS for those staff who choose to remain with that program; however, it was ultimately decided that the RRSP would remain the same, and current staff will need to choose which alternative is a better fit for them.

MOTIONS #BD 40/25

**Moved by Jaden Hodgins
Seconded David Marsh**

"RESOLVED, THAT the ABCA join the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS), and

"FURTHER, THAT all future staff that meet the eligibility criteria are automatically enrolled in OMERS, and

"FURTHER, THAT existing staff that meet the eligibility criteria have the choice to remain enrolled in the existing Registered Retirement Savings Plan administered with GC Financial through Sunlife, or enroll in the OMERS plan, and

"FURTHER, THAT existing staff choosing to remain in the current plan, continue with the current matching formula that is in place, and

“FURTHER, THAT ABCA begin to make OMERS available to eligible staff once enrollment is finalized.”

Carried.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 p.m.

Ray Chartrand
Chair

Abigail Gutteridge
Secretary

*Copies of program reports are available upon request.
Contact Abigail Gutteridge, Corporate Services Coordinator*