

Hybrid meeting held in-person and electronically

Board of Directors **2/25** **Thursday, February 27, 2025**

Chair Strackerjan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer conducted a roll call.

Adrian Wynands gave the Land Acknowledgement statement.

Sean Devine joined the meeting at 6:35 pm.

Chair Waterfield reviewed the Agenda.

1

Resolution 1-250227

Moved by: Brian Dowdall
Seconded by: Steve Fournier

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 January 23, 2025

Resolution 2-250227

Moved by: Adrian Wynands
Seconded by: Susan Irwin

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves the Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting #01/25, January 23, 2025 as circulated.

Resolution Carried

7.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising.

8.0 2025 Budget Approval

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, General Manager, presented the draft 2025 Budget for consideration, highlighting one change that had been made to refine the City of Ottawa's special levy for Ice Management resulting in a slight decrease.

A member asked if their request in November to use some reserve funding in the budget for municipalities had been considered. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson indicated that Board direction in November was that it was too late in the budget process to consider that request but that it has been noted and will be part of the budget discussions for 2026.

A member commented that Rideau Lakes had not provided comments on the budget due to the absence of a Treasurer for several months, but the position had now been filled.

Resolution 3-250227

Moved by: Anne Barr
Seconded by: Steve Fournier

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves the attached 2025 Budget in the amount of \$13,425,693 (dated February 5, 2025);

AND THAT a total of \$7,296,032 in operating and capital expenses be apportioned to municipalities using the MCVA apportionment method in accordance with the attached budget and the Conservation Authorities Act and its regulations;

AND THAT the following operating and capital expenses be apportioned to the City of Ottawa using the benefit-based apportionment method in accordance with the attached budget and the Conservation Authorities Act and its regulations:

1. \$10,000 Capital Reserve for Water Control Structures in Ottawa
2. \$21,500 Capital Reserve for Britannia Village Flood Control Project
3. \$40,000 Operation of General Water Control Structures in Ottawa
4. \$586,073 Rideau River Ice Management in Ottawa
5. \$163,457 Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring in Ottawa
6. \$65,000 Operation of Windsor and Brewer Park Water Control Structures

Those in favour:

Joe Aragona
Anne Barr
Brian Dowdall
Steve Fournier
Wilson Lo
Shelley Petersen-Quesnel
Adam Turcotte
Adrian Wynands

Jeff Banks
David Brown
Sean Devine
Susan Irwin
Shawn Pankow
Angela Pierman
Gary Waterfield

Those Opposed:

Abstentions:

Absent:

Trevor Johnson
Kristin Strackerjan

Theresa Kavanagh

Resolution Carried

9.0 Forestry Machine Planting Contract

Ian Cochrane, Forestry Program Manager, provided an overview of RVCA's machine planting and band spraying contract and the bid process.

A member asked why only one bid was received for this contract while the other forestry contracts received multiple bids. Mr. Cochrane explained that tree planting is a very niche skill, and it is difficult to find contractors who can plant large volumes of trees in a small three week window.

A member commented that they felt the pricing was very reasonable.

Resolution 4-250227

Moved by: David Brown
Seconded by: Jeff Banks

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves retaining Ottawa Valley Forest Consulting to provide machine planting and band spray services for 2025 at a rate of \$609 per 1000 trees planted.

AND THAT, based on performance, staff have the option of retaining Ottawa Valley Forest Consulting to provide machine planting services for 2026 at the same price.

Resolution Carried

10.0 Forestry Large Hand Planting Contract

Mr. Cochrane provided an overview of RVCA's large hand planting contract and bid process.

There were no questions.

Resolution 5-250227

Moved by: Susan Irwin
Seconded by: Adrian Wynands

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves retaining Brinkman Reforestation Ltd. to provide hand planting services for 2025 at a rate of \$655 per 1000 trees for new planting sites and \$705 per 1000 trees for refill planting sites.

AND THAT, based on performance, staff have the option of retaining Brinkman & Associates Reforestation Ltd. to provide hand planting services for 2026 at the same price.

Resolution Carried

11.0 Forestry Small Hand Planting Contract

Mr. Cochrane provided an overview of RVCA's small hand planting contract and bid process.

There were no questions.

Resolution 6-250227

Moved by:

Sean Pankow

Seconded by:

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves Brinkman Reforestation Ltd. to provide hand planting services for 2025 at a rate of \$705 per 1000 trees for new planting sites and \$755 per 1000 trees for refill planting sites.

AND THAT, based on performance, staff have the option of retaining Brinkman Reforestation Ltd. to provide hand planting services for 2026 at the same price.

Resolution Carried

12.0 Forestry Spot Spraying Contract

Mr. Cochrane provided an overview of RVCA's spot spraying contract and bid process.

A member asked how many contracts occur simultaneously. Mr. Cochrane explained that machine and hand planting occurs at the same time while spot spraying takes place after the trees are planted.

Resolution 7-250227

Moved by:

Steve Fournier

Seconded by:

Joe Aragona

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves Brinkman Reforestation Ltd. to provide spot spraying services for 2025 at a rate of \$319 per 1000 trees sprayed.

AND THAT, based on performance, staff have the option of retaining Brinkman Reforestation Ltd. to provide spot spraying services for 2026 at the same price.

Resolution Carried

13.0 Appointment of Septic Inspector

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson indicated that a new sewage system inspector needed to be appointed to fill the vacancy left when Jason Hutton was promoted to Chief Building Official.

There were no questions.

Resolution 8-2502274

Moved by:

Susan Irwin

Seconded by: Adrian Wynands

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority appoints the following staff as a Sewage System Inspector under Subsection 6.2 (3) of the Building Code Act, 1992, S.O. 1992, c.23, including amendments thereto:

- Matthew Panciuk

AND THAT this appointment be contingent on continued employment with the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.

Resolution Carried

14.0 Additions to Conservation Areas and Education Fee Schedules

Dan Cooper, Director of Conservation Lands and Stewardship, explained the need to add a few additional rental and program fees as RVCA continues to expand and adjust its programs and services to meet visitor needs.

There were no questions.

Resolution 9-250227

Moved by: Anne Barr
Seconded by: David Brown

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approve the addition of the following fees and that these new fees take effect April 1, 2025:

- Schedule G: Conservation Areas
 - Rental Equipment
 - Canoes – \$20
 - Snowshoes – \$5/pair
 - Rental Facilities: Baxter and Foley Mountain Conservation Areas
 - Cleaning fee for facility rentals – up to \$250
- Schedule H: Education Programs
 - Outdoor Education Family Programs
 - Outdoor Education: Half Day Program per family – \$27
 - Family Forest School – \$18/child/day

Resolution Carried

15.0 Surveillance Policy

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson presented a new surveillance policy that will cover any use by the RVCA of video or audio recording equipment.

A member inquired whether there had been any incidents that prompted the policy. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson explained that in recent years the RVCA has had some issues with theft, vandalism and aggressive clients that have created a need for security cameras in certain locations.

A member asked what the timeline would be for completing the appendices. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson indicated that they are nearly complete and expected that they would be finalized, and the policy would be implemented by the end of next week.

A member asked if there would be any issue with municipalities using this policy. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson responded that she would be happy to share it with any municipality and that a copy would be sent to the member's municipal CAO.

Another member inquired about the budget for equipment and if any data would be stored by third party providers. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson indicated that none of the equipment was particularly expensive and would be covered as needed out of RVCA's operating budget. She also confirmed that all data would be stored on RVCA's own server.

Resolution 10-250227

Moved by:

Sean Pankow

Seconded by:

Steve Fournier

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves the attached Surveillance Policy to take effect March 1, 2025.

Resolution Carried

Theresa Kavanagh joined the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

16.0 Member Per Diem and Chair Honorarium Rates

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson presented a review of RVCA's per diem and Chair honorarium rates.

A member indicated that their municipality had recently completed a review and found that municipalities generally under compensate elected officials. He then asked if the Chair felt the current honourarium was reasonable. Chair Waterfield indicated that he had taken the Chair role without knowing there was an honourarium and indicated that he supported maintaining it at its current rate.

Another member stated that municipal elected officials are unpaid and that the per diem rate should be increased to \$85, the Chair honourarium should be increased to \$2,400 and that the RVCA should have a policy that those rates receive whatever cost-of-living increase is applied to staff salaries.

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson responded that the cost impact of such an increase would not be significant and that RVCA's budget could accommodate it. She also noted that some conservation authorities do have a policy like the one that was proposed where rates increase annually to reflect the same increase applied to salaries and that it could be reflected in RVCA's Administrative Bylaw.

A member inquired about the per diem rate at Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson noted that while MVCA did not participate in the recent survey of conservation authorities, she recalls from past surveys that they were a little lower than the RVCA while South Nation is a little higher.

Another member indicated support for a policy that would adjust the rate annually as it would eliminate the need for future Board discussions on the matter.

A member expressed support for the motion and asked why Hamilton's Chair honourarium was significantly higher than most conservation authorities. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson indicated that she could not speak to the rate set by Hamilton.

Other members also expressed support for the motion, including some City of Ottawa councillors who are not eligible to receive the per diem rate.

Resolution 11-250227

Moved by:

Jeff Banks

Seconded by:

David Brown

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approve a Per Diem rate of \$85 to be paid to Members and an honourarium rate of \$2,400 to be paid to the Chair in accordance with the RVCA's Administrative Bylaw, and that these rates be effective retroactively to January 1, 2025;

AND THAT a policy be established to adjust these rates annually in accordance with any cost-of-living increase applied to staff salaries and then rounded to the nearest ten cents.

Resolution Carried

17.0 Administrative By-Law Amendments

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson presented updates to RVCA's Administrative By-Law and noted that the resolution passed under the previous agenda item would also be reflected.

A member inquired about the possibility of hiring an integrity commissioner to investigate alleged breaches of the bylaw. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson explained that, while RVCA does not have an integrity commissioner on retainer like a municipality, the policy allows for third-party involvement if necessary, including the use of an integrity commissioner. She noted that any substantial issues would be referred to a third party for investigation and indicated that appointing an integrity commissioner in advance had not been deemed necessary due to the low frequency of alleged breaches.

The member also asked about RVCA's mileage rate, to which Ms. Casgrain-Robertson indicated that RVCA adjusts its mileage rate annually to reflect the rate set by CRA which is currently \$0.72 for the first 5000 kilometres. The member stated that their municipality's treasurer informed him that any rate over \$0.70 would be considered income. Ms. Casgrain-Robertson indicated that the CRA ensures they set a rate that reflects compensation for the expense rather than a rate that would be considered income or a taxable benefit.

Chair Waterfield invited additional comments or questions on the need for an integrity commissioner and a member expressed support for maintaining the status quo, noting that the current policy allows a third party to be engaged to investigate an alleged breach.

A member noted that addressing an alleged breach internally would put a high degree of responsibility on the Chair, Vice-Chair and/or General Manager so there may be some merit in having an integrity commissioner as an objective back-up resource. The member requested that information about what other conservation authorities are doing in this regard be gathered. Chair Waterfield directed staff to bring back a report on practices at other conservation authorities.

A member also requested a cost estimate for hiring an integrity commissioner.

A member suggested that the report to be prepared by staff include information about how an integrity commissioner would be obtained and whether one should be contacted in every situation.

A member echoed concerns about the appropriateness of staff or board members investigating alleged breaches, highlighting that the work of an integrity commissioner is confidential.

A member inquired about how this would affect the Administrative By-Law changes being proposed this evening and Ms. Casgrain-Robertson suggested that the Board could approve proposed amendments except for Section 21 (pg. 56) which outlines enforcement of the bylaws and policies.

Resolution 12-250227**Moved by:**

Wilson Lo

Seconded by:

Adrian Wynands

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approves the attached amended Administrative By-Law including appendices except for section 21.

Resolution Carried

Angela Pierman left the meeting 7:31 p.m.

18.0 Annual General Meeting**a.) Appointment of Executive Committee**

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson reviewed the role and appointment of the Executive Committee. There were no questions.

Resolution 13-250227**Moved by:**

Brian Dowdall

Seconded by:

Joe Aragona

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority appoints the Chair, Vice-Chair, Anne Barr, Brian Dowdall, and Adrian Wynands to the RVCA's Executive Committee for the year 2025.

Resolution Carried**b.) Appointment of Audit Committee**

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson reviewed the role and appointment of the Audit Committee. There were no questions.

Resolution 14-250227**Moved by:**

Anne Barr

Seconded by:

Brian Dowdall

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority appoint the Chair, Vice-Chair, Steve Fournier, Adrian Wynands and Trevor Johnson to the RVCA Audit Committee for the year 2025.

Resolution Carried**c.) Appointments to Conservation Ontario**

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson reviewed the role and appointment of Conservation Ontario Council delegates. There were no questions.

Resolution 15-250227**Moved by:**

Adrian Wynands

Seconded by:

Susan Irwin

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority appoints the Chair as RVCA's voting delegate for Conservation Ontario Council for 2025 and that the Vice-Chair and General Manager be appointed as first and second alternate respectively.

Resolution Carried

d.) Appointment to Auditors

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson reviewed the appointment of Auditors. There were no questions.

Resolution 16-250227

Moved by:

Steve Fournier

Seconded by:

Anne Barr

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority appoints MNP LLP as the auditor for the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority and Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation for 2025.

Resolution Carried

e.) Appointment to Legal Counsel

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson reviewed the appointment of legal counsel. There were no questions.

Resolution 17-250227

Moved by:

Joe Aragona

Seconded by:

Wilson Lo

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority appoints the firm of Bell Baker LLP as legal counsel for the RVCA for the year 2024;

THAT the firm of Bird Richard be retained for employment issues;

THAT the firm of Wilson Law Partners LLP be retained for land transfers;

AND THAT other legal counsel be retained as required.

Resolution Carried

f.) Appointment of Signing Authorities

Ms. Casgrain-Robertson reviewed the appointment of signing authorities. There were no questions.

Resolution 18-250227

Moved by:

Adrian Wynands

Seconded by: Jeff Banks

THAT the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority appoints the following positions as RVCA's signing officers for 2025:

- General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer
- Manager of Finance
- Director of Communications and Outreach
- Chair of the Board of Directors
- Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors

Resolution Carried

19.0 Meetings

- a) Flood Forecasting and Warning Info Day: City of Ottawa – Feb 26, 2025
- Ms. Casgrain-Robertson indicated that there had been great attendance at both flood forecasting information days on February 26 for the City of Ottawa and February 24 for the middle and upper watershed

Upcoming

- b) Grenville Federation of Agriculture AGM – February 28, 2025

- c) Executive Committee Hearing Training – March 20, 2025

- d) Board of Directors Meeting – March 27, 2025

- Preceded by Staff Information Session and Office Tour (4:00 pm)

20.0 Member Inquiries

None.

21.0 New Business

Chair Waterfield emphasized the value of enhanced interaction between the Board and staff and encouraged as many members as possible to attend the March information session in person. Chair Waterfield also shared plans to visit all of RVCA's conservation areas during this tenure as Chair with updates to be posted on LinkedIn and Facebook. He invited members to connect with him via social media.

22.0 Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7: 44 p.m. on a resolution by David Brown which was seconded by Wilson Lo.

Gary Waterfield
Chair

Marissa Grondin
Recording Secretary

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson
General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer