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The Grand River Conservation Authority membership meeting begins shortly. Here's what is on the agenda:



MEETING PREVIEW: Grand River Conservation Board Meeting for Febr...

This month's general meeting of the Grand River Conservation Authority will be all about money. The 2023 budget and all its intricacies will be up for debate along with the usual business of ...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2023/02/17/meeting-preview-grand-river-conservation-board-m...>

Chair White is calling the meeting to order. He's welcoming all the special guests including MPs Bryan May, Mike Morrice and Lloyd Longfield.

First item is a recognition of past members of the GRCA board.

Getting into the real meeting, White talks about tending a flood warning meeting last week, which he said had some great information about potential future flood dangers along the watershed. Also toasts funding ann't for Cambridge to Paris trail.

White discusses how regulatory changes are impacting the budget. Now there's three parts: 1) the basics funded through the levy, 2) discretionary items that CAs can agree to fund with municipalities, and 3) things they have to fund themselves.

Agenda approved.

No Declarations of Pecuniary Interest.

Minutes from last meeting approved.

Motion to receive this month's correspondences. Approved.

10. Correspondence

Recommendation:

THAT Correspondence from Halton Region regarding their 2023 budget direction, and from Bev McIntyre regarding the 2023 Guelph Lake seasonal campsite fees and the

related response from GRCA staff be received as information.

- a. Halton Region - 2023 Budget Direction
- b. Bev McIntyre - Guelph Lake CA seasonal camping fees
- c. GRCA Response - Guelph Lake CA seasonal camping fees

Next, amended change to the fees. This was noted in one of the correspondences, one fee category was missed the update to fees approved in Dec. Motion carried.

a. GM-02-23-20 - GRCA Fee Policy Schedule 2 - Conservation Areas - Amended

Recommendation:

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority Fee Schedule 2 - Conservation Areas be approved, amended, and implemented effective February 24, 2023

Next, comms agreement with GRCA and First Nations. Approved.

b. GM-02-23-10 - Grand River Notification Agreement Renewal

Recommendation:

THAT the Chair of the Grand River Conservation Authority be authorized to sign the renewal of the Grand River Notification Agreement.

Next two items:

c. Minutes of the GRCA Board Composition Review Committee - February 10, 2023 47

Recommendation:

THAT the minutes of the GRCA Board Composition Review Committee held on February 10, 2023 be received as information.

d. GM-02-23-18 - Current Watershed Conditions 50

Recommendation:

THAT Report Number GM-02-23-18 – Current Watershed Conditions as of February 14, 2023 be received as information.

The current conditions is straightforward, but the composition committee is about representation at the board and staff are reviewing options following a motion at Hamilton council. Both items approved.

AKA: tree planting contracts. Fun fact: around 100,000 trees are being planted incl. white pine, Tamarack and other native species, mostly seedlings.

Approved.

e. GM-02-22-13 - Afforestation Services for Spring 2023

Recommendation:

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority award the 2023 contract for machine planting for seedlings to Bartram Woodlands Ltd. in the amount of \$14,405.00 (excluding taxes) and a total budget of \$16,565.75 (excluding taxes) be approved;

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority award the 2023 contract for hand planting for seedlings to Brinkman & Associates Ltd. in the amount of \$111,105.00 (excluding taxes) and a total budget of \$127,770.75 (excluding taxes) be approved;

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority award the 2023 contract for

hand planting for tall stock to Tamarack Reforestation Inc. in the amount of \$39,975.00 (excluding taxes) and a total budget of \$45,971.25 (excluding taxes) be approved.

Two motions about the replacement of equipment and vehicles.

f. GM-02-23-14 - 2023 Replacement Tractors Purchase

Recommendation:

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority purchase two 2023 John Deere model 4052R, tractors with cab and front loader from Premier Equipment Ltd. (Elmira) for a total amount of \$149,334.34 (excluding HST).

g. GM-02-23-15 - 2023 Replacement Vehicle Purchase

Recommendation:

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority purchase one 2023 Ford F150 XL Supercrew 4x4 Hybrid ½ ton pickup truck for a total amount of \$73,280.00 (excluding HST) from Parkway Ford Sales Ltd;

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority purchase one 2023 Ford Transit 350 medium roof van at a total cost of \$66,495.00 (excluding HST) from Parkway Ford Sales Ltd.

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority purchase two 2023 Dodge 3500 4x4 pickup trucks for a total amount of \$150,818.00 (excluding HST) from Blue Mountain Chrysler Ltd.

Member Miller asks how long the GRCA's been using the same criteria for tractor purchase. Staff say it's not only about price, but it's also about value. Want equipment to last long term and meet specific specs for the area it'll be used in.

Fun fact: One of the new tractors will be going to Guelph Lake.

Tractor motion approved. On the trucks, no questions so the motion is approved too.

Next, road site preparation. Motion approved.

h. GM-02-23-12 - 2023 Road Site Preparation and Surface Treatment

Recommendation:

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority award the tender for the 2023 road site preparation and surface treatment to Cornell Construction Limited of Brantford, Ontario up to the amount of \$572,700.00 excluding HST;

AND THAT a total project budget of \$630,000.00 excluding HST be approved.

Monthly financial reports approved.

i. GM-02-23-09 - Cash and Investment Status

Recommendation:

THAT Report Number GM-02-23-09 Cash and Investment Status – January 2023 be received as information.

j. GM-02-23-16 - Financial Summary

Recommendation:

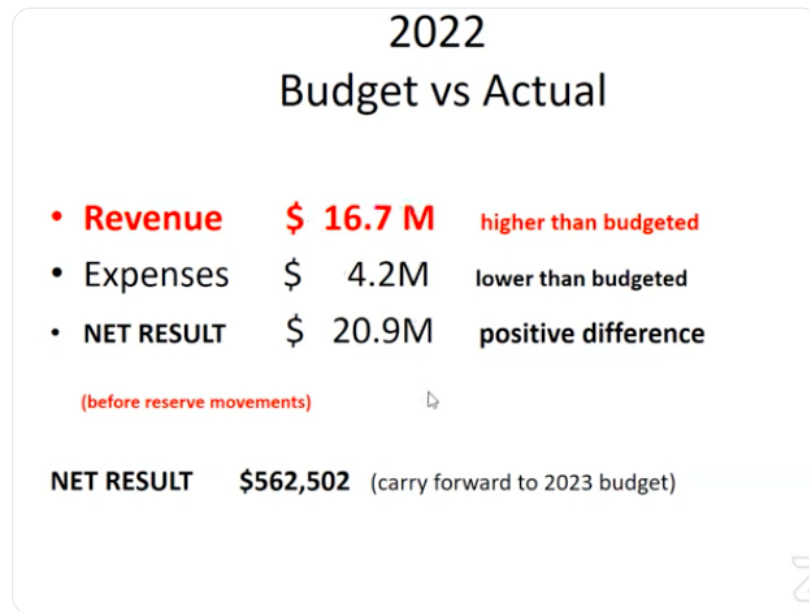
THAT the Financial Statements for the period ending January 31, 2023 be approved.

First bit of budge business: Weighted Voting - 2023 Budget and General Levy. The recommendation is moved and approved and this bit from the preview explains it in a nutshell.

Weighted Voting: 2023 Budget and General Levy – When it comes to the budget for the GRCA, each member municipality pays in through a general levy, but the voting is weighed in order to prevent any one municipality from being able to pass something on it's own. In the case of the GRCA, where 50 per cent of the membership is made up by reps from Waterloo Region, each of those 10 members get five per cent of the vote when compared to the two reps from Guelph who get 6.8 per cent each, and thus preventing Waterloo Region from setting direction for the authority has it's own block.

While the budget presentation gets set up, we're going to talk about some general business. From Audit committee there's some info to share about the budget.

It was a pretty good year for the CA with the 2022 budget originally looking at a \$4 million deficit, but revenue was way up than what was original predicted.



Expenses are \$4 million less mostly because of deferral of capital projects, and some delays in the flood mapping project. A new construction project at Guelph Lake has not commenced yet.

In terms of operating expenses, there were savings due to vacancies, and due to the receipt of grants for special projects that were able to cover some admin costs.

Member Smith asks about the deferrals of some project. Sonja Radoja, Manager of Corporate Services, said that there will be a report on the deferral of control structures, and they will bring back info on parks projects in the financial forecast.

Miller notes that the idea of the CA generating half of its own income would have been crazy, but that's b/c gov grants falling down. Is the current revenue line expected to remain at 6%? Staff says they're anticipating it will constant, esp for flood mgmt.

Longfield adds that many of the grants are multi-year grants like the 2 billion trees funding which is three years. Hints that there may be more funding coming out the Federal budget.

Miller, on staff answer, says that hope is a bad strategy, but we should be using it as leverage the fact that communities in the watershed have been targeted as a growth area, and that demand comes from ONgov and Feds. We should be insisting no cuts. White sympathies.

Reserves increase by nearly \$19 million this year, so that's good news, even after \$800k was taken out.

Reserves

- **Overall \$18.6 million increase**
- **Significant Items:**
 - TRANSFERRED INTO Reserves (\$19.4M)**
 - \$ 15,200,000 Land Sale Proceeds Reserve
 - \$ 2,225,000 Conservation Area Surplus
 - \$ 700,000 Interest Income
 - \$ 450,000 Transition Reserve (2022 surplus)**
 - \$ 200,000 Forestry Reserve (Timber Revenue)
 - \$ 200,000 Flood Control Structures Reserve (savings)
 - TAKEN OUT of Reserves (\$800K)**
 - (\$ 340,000) Motor Pool
 - (\$ 245,000) CEWS Interest
 - (\$ 170,000) Floodplain Mapping Projects
 - (\$ 40,000) Computer Equipment

Radoja's highlights:

Highlights

- **Conservation Area Results (High Volume Year – New Revenue High Achieved)**
 - Fee **Revenue \$2.2M over budget** (\$11.2M Actual vs \$9.0M Budget)
 - **Operating Expenses \$350,000 over budget** (\$8.150M Actual vs \$7.8M Budget)
 - **Capital Spending \$1,050,000 under budget** (\$935K Actual vs \$2.0 M Budget)
 - Transferred **\$2.225M to reserves**
- **Resource Planning Revenue same as prior year - \$1,190,000**
 - REVENUE:**
 - after a number of years of steadily rising revenue, 2022 remained consistent with 2021
 - \$150,000 over budget (or 15%) over budget
 - \$1,200,000 Actual vs \$1,045,000 Budget
 - EXPENSES:**
 - \$2.4M budget
 - \$120,000 under budget
 - legal savings transferred to reserve

Audit committee report approved. So are the additional directions coming out of audit.

Recommendation:

THAT the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee dated February 25, 2022 be approved and implemented with the approval date of February 24, 2023.

Recommendation:

THAT the Gauge Reserve be increased by \$45,000;

AND THAT the Forestry Reserve be increased by \$70,000;

AND THAT the Master Plans Reserve be increased by \$90,000

AND THAT the Nature Centre Reserves be increased by \$35,000 to be distributed equally between the App's, Guelph, Laurel, Taquanyah, and Shade's Mills reserves.

Approved unanimously.

Recommendation:

THAT the Financial Statements of Grand River Conservation Authority as at December 31, 2022 and the Report of the Auditors thereon be received, approved and placed on file;

AND THAT copies be made available to all member municipalities, Grand River Conservation Authority Members and the Ontario Ministries of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Appointment of Auditors

Motion to make KPMG the external auditor again approved unanimously.

The budget vote. This is a recorded voted because of that weighed voting thing mentioned earlier.

Recommendation:

THAT the 2023 Budget of Grand River Conservation Authority of \$35,426,690 be approved;

AND THAT the member municipalities be assessed for payment of:

Matching Levy: \$449,688

Non-Matching Levy: \$11,568,312

Capital Levy: \$950,000

Total General Levy: \$12,968,000

The budget is approved unanimously.

White says now staff can get out and do all the good work they do.

Next, housekeeping motion that gives the CA the ability to borrow to cover costs in cases there's an unexpected delay in the payment of levies.

Recommendation:

WHEREAS it may be necessary for Grand River Conservation Authority (hereinafter called the "Authority") to borrow money, on an interim basis, to meet the Authority's financial obligations while awaiting payment of levies by participating municipalities designated as such under The Conservation Authorities Act, RSO 1990 (hereinafter called "Participating Municipalities");

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT the Authority be authorized to borrow, on an interim basis, a sum or sums not exceeding in the aggregate One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) from the Authority's bank at the said bank's minimum lending rate established from time to time, until the Authority has received payment of levies from Participating Municipalities;

AND THAT the Chair or Vice-Chair together with the Chief Administrative Officer or Secretary-Treasurer of the Authority be and they are hereby authorized to execute for and on behalf of the Authority, a promissory note or notes for the sum to be borrowed pursuant to this Resolution and to affix thereto the corporate seal of the Authority;

AND THAT the amount borrowed pursuant to this Resolution, together with interest thereon, be a charge upon the whole of the money received or to be received by the Authority by way of levies collected from Participating Municipalities when such moneys are received;

AND THAT the Chair or Vice-Chair or the Chief Administrative Officer or Secretary-Treasurer of the Authority be and is hereby authorized and directed to apply, in payment of the moneys borrowed pursuant to this Resolution

together with interest thereon, all of the moneys received by the Authority by way of levies collected from Participating Municipalities.

Cllr Billings asks why the CA wouldn't borrow internally instead of going out to the bank? Radoja says they've never actually had to enforce this motion, it would essentially be a line of credit.

Billings asks why wouldn't the CA charge municipalities interest if they're late. Radoja says the members always pay on time, buuuuut, if they wanted to change the payment schedule the GRCA has no power to appeal. It's a fail safe.

Provision for borrowing approved unanimously.

Audit Committee appointments: White and Vice-Chair Foxton are in, and the previous members of audit including Guy Guardhouse the chair are standing for reappointment. Slate approved.

Appointment of special recognition committee. Hasn't been used in years, so we're not appointing anyone today.

These appointments approved.

c. Appointment of Conservation Ontario Council Representatives

Recommendation:

THAT the Chair and the Chief Administrative Officer be appointed as Members of Conservation Ontario Council;

AND THAT the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Secretary Treasurer be appointed as an Alternate Member of Conservation Ontario Council.

Other business? Foxton asks if there's a board selected to look at conservation grants that go out to the public. Staff says that's the foundation that covers those now, though they used to be a select committee.

Member Lawrence congratulates the City of Brantford for securing the hosting of the Hamilton Bulldogs for the next three years. He knows it's not board business, but wanted to shout it out since Brantford sits on the Grand.

Meeting adjourned!



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