

Board Meeting Highlights

October 22, 2021

Announcements:

- a) CAO Rob Baldwin mentioned that the drop-in retirement party recently held for the Authority's former CAO Mike Walters was very well attended and it was so nice to see so many staff and other friends and contacts. The former CAO retired at the end of 2020, but due to COVID only a virtual celebration was permitted at that time.
- b) CAO Rob Baldwin advised that staff have been working through a vaccination policy, which will include members of the Board. The policy has gone through legal review and is now being reviewed by the Authority's Health and Safety Committee. He anticipates the final policy being available to staff the Board members in a week or so. He also advised that staff continue to work from home, and the return to the physical offices in a cohort rotation format is set for January 10, 2022.

Presentations:

a) Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Comprehensive Review of Planning and Development Fees and Draft Proposed Fee Schedule Planning and Development

Mr. Sean-Michael Stephen of Watson & Associates provided an overview of the comprehensive review of the Planning and Development Fees Policy that was undertaken for the Authority, noting the principle objectives of the review included assessing full cost of service and making recommendations that ensure conformity with all legislation and guidelines; balancing the Authority's need to maximize cost recovery with stakeholder interests, affordability, and competitiveness; as well as reviewing the fees policy. The review also included an assessment of mapping and data sharing fees, Environmental Assessment review fees, Environmental Compliance Approval review fees, project costings; and other consulting services provided.

The process to assess the full cost of planning and permitting services included a review of background information, costing categories and application patterns; document fee categorization and development of review process maps; design processing effort estimates and staff capacity utilization analysis; development of activity-based costing models to generate draft full cost fee schedules; calculation of full cost recovery and policy driven fees, and testing using conservation authority/municipal comparison surveys, market competitiveness, and applicant affordability; and preparation of a report and recommendations.

The review determined that 71% of annual staff time is spent on plan/permit review activities, and the remaining 29% is spent on activities not considered as part of this review (examples: engineering staff time required for flood forecasting and warning services, floodplain model updates and internal and external data requests to support industry partners or internal

departments). Current annual costs of service are \$5.0 million (\$2.2 million for plan review, \$2.7 million for permitting, and \$0.1 million for other reviews). Direct costs of service represent 73% of the total annual costs, while the indirect costs represent 20%, and capital costs make up the remaining 7% of annual costs.

At present, fees recover 61% of the total annual cost of processing. In the plan review, fees are recovering 69% of full costs of services. Permitting fees are recovering at 56% of the full cost of service. With respect to permitting fees, the greatest shortfall is attributed to permits related to private residential development. Historically, the costing of these permits has been sensitive to applicant affordability.

A more detailed analysis of the costs and revenues can be found in Chapter 3 of the Watson & Associates report, which can be accessed through this link: [Watson & Associates Final Report](#). To view this presentation, please click this link: [Plan Review and Permitting Fees Review](#)

The Board received Staff Report No. 50-21-BOD regarding the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Comprehensive Review of Planning and Development Fees by Watson & Associates and endorsed the recommendations of the report by Watson & Associates, a copy of which is to be circulated to member municipalities, Conservation Ontario, Greater Golden Horseshoe Conservation Authorities, and the Building Industry and Land Development Association for information. The Board directed staff to bring the proposed 2022 fees schedule back at the November 2021 meeting for approval.

b) Q3 Financial Report and year-end Forecast

General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, Mark Critch, provided an overview of the Authority's 3rd Quarter 2021 Financial Report and Year-End Forecast, noting annual operating plans are progressing as expected and a small surplus is projecting for year-end, similar to what was reported at the end of the second quarter. The Authority's financial condition remains strong and continues to be monitored by staff. He noted the 2022 budget process is well underway.

Third quarter highlights include an overall surplus of \$267K, with most programs and projects on track. Revenue generated is in line with expectations, including the tree planting and education programs, which are worth noting due to the challenging year these two areas had through the pandemic. He noted a small deficit in ecological management and staffing variances in Planning & Development. He updated on capital investments made in 2021, noting all capital projects are in progress and many will carry over to the beginning of 2022.

The year-end forecast is based on staff not returning to the offices until 2022. Deferred revenue is being used to finish some Annual Operating Priorities, specifically watershed planning initiatives and completion of the Strategic Plan. Overall, the Authority's financial condition is good. To view this presentation, please click this link: [3rd Quarter 2021 Financial Update](#)

The Board received Staff Report No. 51-21-BOD regarding the Third Quarter 2021 Financial Report and Year-End Forecast.

c) Climate Change Education Programs

Manager, Education, Nicole Hamley provided an update on climate change Education Programs, noting that in 2019 a report entitled “Canada, Climate Change and Education: Opportunities for Public and Formal Education”, outlined several key research findings including: (i) the majority of Canadians feel more time on climate change education is needed, (ii) students widely believe that climate change is happening, but do not express confidence that anything can be done about it, (iii) educators want to teach climate change, but they need more training to connect climate change to their courses, and (iv) community partners continue to play a key role in climate change education. She advised that prior to 2019, climate change was embedded into the Authority’s school programs in age-appropriate ways. In 2019, new and well received climate change programs were introduced for students at the Nature Centre and for teachers at Sheppard’s Bush. Moving into 2020, COVID-19 presented significant challenges and a new approach was needed. The Education team collaborated with the Integrated Watershed Management division, resulting in four new climate change education programs and services that launched in 2021 that would meet specific recommendations in the Authority’s Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies, two in School Programming and two in Community Programming.

New School Programming included: i) a new downloadable Climate Change presentation for grade 7 and 8 educators, accompanied by a Teacher Guide. This free, curriculum-linked resource is easy for educators to implement with minimal preparation; and ii) working with the York Region District School Board, the Authority developed a three-part integrated learning program for grade 7 and 8 students called “Nurturing Local Climate Champions”, where school board teachers deliver an introductory lesson, followed by a live virtual visit by a member of the Authority’s Education team. New Community Programming included: i) a hike series in which five hikes were offered between September 1st and October 16th at three different Authority properties with each hike focusing on a specific topic related to climate change, such as forestry, restoration, water quality and human health; and ii) the launch on October 7th of a new podcast called “Lake Simcoe Sessions”, with a total of five episodes planned for weekly release.

Next steps include analyzing these new initiatives to gauge success and challenges and remaining focused on the final design of the new Nature Centre. To view this presentation, please click this link: [Climate Change Education Update](#). For more information on these new programs, please contact Nicole Hamley @ n.hamley@lsrca.on.ca.

The Board received Staff Report No. 52-21-BOD regarding the Authority’s work to strengthen and expand its climate change education programs.

d) Reducing Winter Salt Case Studies

Manager, Integrated Watershed Management, Bill Thompson provided an overview of case studies on reducing municipal salt application practices while maintaining public safety, noting that since 2014 Authority staff have been working with both municipal staff, provincial roads staff, winter maintenance contractors and industry representatives to better understand winter maintenance practices and barriers to adoption of better practices, with the ultimate goal being a reduction of chloride loading to Lake Simcoe. Some shifts have been seen over the years in maintenance practices, and accordingly funding from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks was used to document these shifts in a series of case studies in hopes of illustrating triple bottom line benefits (environmental, economic, and public safety) associated with better winter maintenance practices. He went on to describe a case study in the public sector and another one in the private sector.

Case Study No 1: In winter 2017/18, the Town of Newmarket shifted from the use of a conventional salt-sand mix on their roads to a treated salt called Thawrox. Since that time and with the effectiveness of the new material, Newmarket has reduced its chloride application rates by 46%. While Thawrox is more expensive than conventional salt, these reduction in application rates has more than offset the increased material costs, resulting in a 33% savings in material costs on a per-event basis. Most importantly, there has been no increase in collisions on Newmarket's roads since these new practices were adopted.

Case Study No 2: Authority staff have been monitoring operational practices and stormwater run-off from a large commercial parking lot since 2014. During this time, two different contractors have managed the 14-ha lot. The current contractor, who has a greater level of training and uses a treated material similar to the Town of Newmarket, uses less than half of the material to manage this parking lot than the previous contractor, who followed more conventional practices. It is important to note, that no slips, falls, or complaints from the public were documented during the tenure of either contractor in this parking lot. For more information on these case studies or winter maintenance practices, please contact Bill Thompson @ b.thompson@lsrca.on.ca. To view this presentation, please click this link: [Reducing Winter Salt Case Studies](#)

The Board received Staff Report No. 51-21-BOD 53-21-BOD regarding case studies of the benefits of adoption of better winter maintenance practices.

Correspondence and Staff Reports:

Correspondence

The Board received the following correspondence:

- a) Conservation Ontario's letter and attachment dated September 24, 2021 to Minister Piccini regarding Conservation Authority Governance Accountability Initiative;
- b) Conservation Ontario's letter and attachment dated October 5, 2021 to Minister Piccini regarding Conservation Authority Client Service and Streamlining Initiative;
- c) Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' email dated October 7, 2021 regarding new regulations made under the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

In-year Budget Improvements

The Board received Staff Report No. 54-21-BOD regarding in-year budget improvements and authorized the Chief Financial Officer to make necessary budget adjustments to enable more meaningful budget-to-actual comparisons in year and better year-over-year budget analysis.

Scanlon Creek Nature Centre Project – Selection of Prime Design Consultant

The Board received Staff Report No. 55-21-BOD regarding the results of RFP #2021-CL-0002 for Prime Design Consultant Services for the Scanlon Creek Nature Centre Project and directed the Chief Administrative Officer to finalize a contract to retain the services of Gow Hastings Architects as the Prime Design Consultant.

WC3 Stormwater Pond Retrofit Project - Kennedy Street West, Aurora

The Board received Staff Report No. 56-21-BOD regarding the WC3- Stormwater management pond retrofit project in Aurora and authorized the use of funding for the project the Town of Aurora. The Board directed Authority staff to select a construction contractor in accordance with the Authority's purchasing policy.

Confidential Human Resources Matter

The Board received Confidential Staff Report No. 57-21-BOD regarding a confidential human resources matter and approved the recommendations contained within the report.

For more information or to see the full agenda package, visit [LSRCA's Board of Directors' webpage](#).