AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION
CREATING AWARENESS | TAKING ACTION

MINUTES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, September 17, 2026
Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Boardroom
Morrison Dam Conservation Area

DIRECTORS PRESENT
Ray Chartrand, Adrian Cornelissen, Joey Groot, Dave Jewitt, David Marsh, Marissa Vaughan

DIRECTORS ABSENT
Steve Herold, Jaden Hodgins, Wayne Shipley

STAFF PRESENT
Elizabeth Balfour, Andrew Bicknell, Rosalind Chang, Tina Crown, Millie Ghorbankhani, Abbie Gutteridge, Davin Heinbuck, Brian Horner, Jaden Schoelier, Nathan Schoelier

CALL TO ORDER
Chair Ray Chartrand called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m., welcomed everyone in attendance, and read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION #BD 79/26 **Moved David Marsh**
Seconded by Dave Jewitt

"RESOLVED, THAT the agenda for the September 17, 2026, Board of Directors Meeting be approved as amended."

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 80/26 **Moved by Marissa Vaughan**
Seconded by Joey Groot

"RESOLVED, THAT the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on July 16, 2026, the Budget Committee meeting held on August 20, 2026, and the email vote from August 21, 2026, and the motions therein be approved as circulated."

Carried.

BUSINESS OUT OF THE MINUTES

2027 Proposed Budget

Nathan Schoelier, Acting General Manager, provided a summary of the Budget Committee meeting held on August 20, 2026. He noted that the Board asked staff to provide some options for bringing the budget to a total increase of approximately 3%, specifically looking at using more from reserves or interest earned on investments. However, the Board also asked staff to move the pay grid increase to 3% to align with ABCA's Pay Grid Adjustment Policy. As suggested, staff found several projects where more reserve funding could be used and brought the overall increase to 3.06%

Board members were comfortable with the revisions and agreed that the draft budget should be sent to member municipalities for consultation.

MOTION #BD 81/26 **Moved by Adrian Cornelissen**
Seconded by Marissa Vaughan

"RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approved the proposed amendments to the 2027 Proposed Budget, and

"FURTHER, THAT member municipalities be advised of the 2027 Proposed Category 1 and Category 3 Operating Levy and Budget, and be provided with supplementary information for the 30-day review, as the weighted vote by apportionment is intended to be held at the October 22, 2026 Board of Directors meeting."

Carried.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Nathan Schoelier, provided a brief report outlining the progress of various projects, staff training, upcoming meetings and events, as well as general activities of ABCA staff.

MOTION BD# 82/26 **Moved by David Marsh**
Seconded by Joey Groot

"RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors receives the General Manager's Report for information, as presented."

Carried.

PROGRAM REPORTS

1. (a) Development Review

Jaden Schoelier, Water & Planning Technician, presented the Development Review report pursuant to 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 12 *Applications for Permission* and 12 *Minor Works Applications.*

(b) Violation/Appeals Update

Andrew Bicknell, Water and Planning Manager, noted that staff are tracking a number of violations that are mostly minor in nature. However, there is one more significant violation in a ravine area that could have more major consequences. Staff are currently in the process of trying to contact the landowner.

Board members asked if staff had a way to track violations to ensure that they don't become lost during the consolidation process. Staff assured Board members that they do have a process in place to track violations.

MOTION #BD 83/26 **Moved by Dave Jewitt**
Seconded by Adrian Cornelissen

"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. South Huron Trail Memorandum of Understanding

Nathan Schoelier reminded Board members that the ABCA has had a working relationship with the Municipality of South Huron to manage the South Huron Trail since it was established in 2004. However, a formal agreement was never put in place to document the roles and responsibilities of each organization. A Memorandum of Understanding was developed and has been reviewed by both ABCA's and the Municipality's insurers. The Municipality approved it at their Council meeting in August. If approved by the ABCA, it is subject to approval of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA).

MOTION #BD 84/26 **Moved by Joey Groot**
Seconded by Marissa Vaughan

"RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors authorizes staff to enter the Memorandum of Understanding with the Municipality of South Huron for the South Huron Trail."

Carried.

3. Morrison Dam Conservation Area Master Plan (2026 – 2036)

Nathan Schoelier presented the final draft of the updated Master Plan for Morrison Dam Conservation Area. Following the approval of the draft plan in July, staff engaged the public and various stakeholders for feedback. Any suggestions were very minor in nature, and were incorporated into the final draft. Once approved, it will be made available on the ABCA website.

MOTION #BD 85/26 **Moved by Marissa Vaughan**
Seconded by Dave Jewitt

"RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves the Morrison Dam Conservation Area Master Plan (2026 – 2036)."

Carried.

4. Geospatial Data Capture Proposal for the Ausable River Estuary 2D Flood Modelling

The Community Protection and Enhancement of the Ausable River Estuary and Wetland project is being funded through the Canada Water Agency over four years. Geospatial data is being collected this fall to provide a digital terrain model and digital surface model, which are required to create a 2-dimensional hydraulic model for wetland restoration planning. As this modelling is highly specialized, three qualified firms were invited to submit proposals for the project, instead of requesting proposals through a public tendering process. Two proposals were received; staff recommend that Northway proposal be accepted. While the cost of their proposal was higher than that received by J.D. Barnes, it included all required deliverables as an integrated package. The J.D. Barnes proposal would have required additional staff time to acquire all permits, as well as staff or outside contractor time to produce "model ready" digital terrain model features.

MOTION #BD 86/26 **Moved by David Marsh**
Seconded by Marissa Vaughan

"RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors accepts the proposal from Northway/Photomap/Remote Sensing Ltd. (Northway) for all deliverables outlined in the table, in the amount of $38,355 plus HST."

Carried.

5. Representatives to Conservation Ontario Council

Nathan Schoelier reminded Board members that, per the Administration Regulations, a conservation authority may appoint up to three representatives to Conservation Ontario Council. One representative will be a voting member, and the other two are appointed as alternates. As there have been some recent staffing changes at the ABCA, it is necessary to appoint a second alternate.

MOTION #BD 87/26 **Moved by Adrian Cornelissen**
Seconded by Joey Groot

"RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves Nathan Schoelier, Interim General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer, as second alternate voting representative to Conservation Ontario Council."

Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Nathan Schoelier provided a brief update on the Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority (LHRCA) Transition Committee. He noted that the Terms of Reference were provided to the Committee by the Province, and that there is a confidentiality agreement that is to be signed with respect to sensitive information. This was provided at the first meeting that was hosted on September 9, 2026 at the ABCA Administration Office. The regional snapshot, developed by Ernst and Young, was also provided to the group. Overall, all the conservation authorities (CAs) in the LHRCA are doing well. Project Executive, Don Goodyear, noted that he envisions the LHRCA as being one great organization with six offices.

   Nathan also noted that the Ernst and Young snapshot showed that local knowledge should be a priority, as it has been recognized that too much centralization would jeopardize the excellent local service delivery that is consistent across the LHRCA. He also reported that six or seven subcommittees are being developed to look at some of the different aspects of consolidation. These subcommittees will consist of local staff from the various CAs in the LHRCA. We can also pivot staff if we believe particular staff members would be more appropriate to certain topics. The next Transition Committee meeting is being planned for October, to be held at the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority.

Nathan also reported that ABCA submitted the ERO response regarding utilizing watershed population to determine the composition of the Regional Boards of Directors, approved by the Board of Directors via email vote. If the Province makes this change, it could increase the rural voice on the Board.

Chair Ray Chartrand noted that there has still been no answer regarding the formation of Watershed Councils, which remains an important piece for local representation. Davin Heinbuck, Project Executive for the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority, noted that Watershed Councils are to be established following the "Go Live" date set for February 1. He reported that Transition Committees are working on having the basics for an organization in place by that date, and the other details will follow over time. Chair Ray noted that he will continue to push for these councils to be in place as quickly as possible. Finally, Nathan told Board members that Don Goodyear plans to attend the Board of Directors meeting in November.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MOTION #BD 88/26 **Moved by David Marsh**
Seconded by Marissa Vaughan

"RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors go into Committee of the Whole at 11:27 a.m. to discuss a funding matter and property matter, with Nathan Schoelier and Abbie Gutteridge remaining in attendance."

Carried.

MOTION #BD 89/26 **Moved by Joey Groot**
Seconded by Marissa Vaughan

"RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors rise and report at 11:32 a.m."

Carried.

MOTION # 90/26 **Moved by Adrian Cornelissen**
Seconded by Dave Jewitt

"RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors authorize staff to enter into a Transfer Payment Agreement with the Province."

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Dave Jewitt at 11:32 a.m.

_____	_____
Ray Chartrand	Abigail Gutteridge
Chair	Secretary

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