



Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority

Minutes – Board of Directors Meeting

Date: Thursday November 20, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Location: 1078 Bruce Rd 12, Formosa, ON, N0G 1W0 and hybrid

Chair: Tom Hutchinson

Members present: Paul Allen, Larry Allison, Barbara Dobreen, Kevin Eccles, Bud Halpin, Steve McCabe (arrived at 10:30 a.m.), Gregory McLean (virtual, left meeting at 3:00 p.m.), Dave Myette, Mike Niesen, Sue Paterson, Moiken Penner, Jennifer Prenger (virtual), Bill Stewart, Peter Whitten (arrived at 1:00 p.m.)

Staff present: Erik Downing, Adam Chalmers, Donna Lacey, Matt Armstrong, Katie Thomas, Ashley Richards, Emily Williamson, Darren Kenny, Izabela Polowa

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

1. Land Acknowledgement – read by Bud Halpin

We begin our meeting today by respectfully acknowledging the Anishinaabeg Nation, the Haudenosaunee, the Neutral, and the Petun peoples as the traditional keepers of this land. We are committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Motion #G25-79

Moved by Moiken Penner

Seconded by Kevin Eccles

THAT the agenda for the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority meeting, November 20, 2025, be adopted as amended, to add a staff introduction item and to defer the scheduled delegation to a later point in the agenda.

Carried

3. Staff Introduction

The Board of Directors were introduced to the new corporate services administrative assistant and accounts payable clerk.

4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest relative to any item on the agenda.

5. Adoption of Minutes

5.1 Authority meeting September 18, 2025

Motion #G25-80

Moved by Paull Allen

Seconded by Sue Paterson

THAT the minutes of the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority meeting, October 16, 2025, be adopted as presented.

Carried

6. Delegation – HK Mapping, Michael Bayer

A delegation titled “Huron Kinloss Citizens Concerns – SVCA Flood Map Project” was received by the Board of Directors. Mr. Bayer provided some background and concerns with the project, informed the Board of Directors of a petition and letters of support to the Legislature Assembly of Ontario. The petition calls on the province to “Enact legislation to prevent municipalities using Conservation authorities to de facto seize and sell property owners’ property to increase tax revenue”, “Test new computer flood map models against historical data and local knowledge. The external review by another engineering company is not sufficient”, and “Remove the arbitrary 15–37 metre hazard line setback as mandated by the Ontario Government from hazard lines and refine SVCA floodplain maps.”

Mr. Bayer was thanked for his time.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes – none

8. New Business

8.1 GM-2025-25: 2026 SVCA Budget Communications

The GM/S-T reported that the 2026 Budget Communications Toolkit has been completed and circulated to Directors. The toolkit outlines the MCVA apportionment model, provides comparison tables, and offers talking points to support consistent discussions with member municipalities. The initiative is intended to improve clarity and transparency during municipal budget processes and that finance staff of member municipalities were integral to this effort.

8.2 GM-2025-26: 2026 SVCA Budget

Motion #G25-81

Moved by Kevin Eccles

Seconded by Steve McCabe

THAT the SVCA Board of Directors approve the 2026 draft budget in principle;

THAT \$84,000 be taken from Category 1 reserves, to be applied toward apportionment; and

FURTHER THAT staff be authorized to forward the draft budget to the Authority’s watershed municipalities for a 30-day review and commenting period and include the offer of a delegation if requested.

Carried

The motion to approve the 2026 SVCA Draft Budget in principle was amended following discussion, to reflect the a 1.6% apportionment increase, made by allocating \$84,000 from category 1 reserves to apportionment. Several Directors expressed hesitation about drawing from reserves given early discussions regarding potential regional conservation authority amalgamation, noting that reserves can be directed by the Board at any time.

Staff reviewed the distinction between Category 1, 2, and 3 programs and services. Category 1 activities are mandatory under O.Reg 686/21 and funded through cost apportionment. This includes natural hazard management and related activities, conservation and management of authority owned lands (including maintenance of facilities, trails, parking, and other capital assets related to public recreation), as well as general administration of the authority. Category 2 programs are delivered through municipal agreements. Category 3 activities are programs that further conservation but are funded either through self-generated revenue (ie. campgrounds) or through cost apportioning agreements (ie. the SVCA Water Quality Program).

The Board discussed the Modified Current Value Assessment process and weighted vote procedure used to approve apportionment and the final budget. Directors with a higher apportionment value carry a larger portion of the total vote and attendance is required to vote.

Clarification was provided on reserve categories. Category 1 reserves reflect overages from mandatory programs. Category 3 reserves reflect exceedances of self-generated revenue. Special Projects reserves relate to initiatives such as the Environmental Baseline Monitoring Program for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

The provincial fee freeze related to Environmental Planning and Regulations fees was touched on, with Director Halpin noting that this loss of revenue is downloaded to the ratepayer.

8.3 CS-2025-27: 2026 Fee Schedule

Motion #G25-82

Moved by Steve McCabe

Seconded by Bill Stewart

THAT the Board of Directors of Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority approve the amendments to the attached Fee Policy, and approve the following fee schedules to take effect on January 1, 2026 (Schedules A, C and D).

Carried

The GM/S-T reported that the Fee Policy has been updated to reflect the completion of the Environmental Planning and Regulations Fee Review. Manager Armstrong clarified that provincial communication regarding the fee freeze prevents any changes to EPR fees. Staff confirmed that while a suggestion was made to create a new fee for meeting the provincial 21 to 29 day review window, SVCA already issues permits within 3 to 5 days of receiving a complete application. A Director also noted that introducing such a fee, even if permitted, would create financial inequity.

8.4 CS-2025-28: 2026 Finance Report

Manager Chalmers presented financial statements through June 2025. Director Dobreen inquired whether additional statements would be brought forward, and staff confirmed that more reports will be provided. Director Allison inquired as to the expected frequency, the intention of presenting them at every meeting or every other meeting in 2026 was expressed. It was noted that Corporate Services has experienced a challenging year, with leaves of absence and subsequent vacancies affecting finance support for the majority of the year.

8.5 GM-2025-29: SVCA Operational Plan

The GM/S-T presented the SVCA Operational Plan to date. Director Dobreen requested an opportunity to review the signed Children’s Safety Village agreement. Manager Lacey advised that she would provide a report to the Authority at a future meeting.

8.6 GM-2025-30: Program Report

The GM/S-T highlighted the inclusion of communications metrics within the SVCA program report as well as a summary table of EPR permits issued between September 25 and October 23, 2025.

8.7 GM-2025-31: 2026 Provincial Announcement on Conservation Authority Restructuring

Director McCabe remarked that the proposed Huron-Superior regional conservation authority was large and questioned where contributions were to come from. Director Myette inquired as to the source of these changes, and the GM/S-T explained these changes were issued through the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Chair Hutchinson shared the understanding that regional conservation authorities would be absorbing the assets of the local conservation authorities. Director Dobreen thanked SVCA staff for clear and quick communication regarding the proposed changes. The Authority was assured that additional information would be coming from staff to member municipalities as correspondence, aligned with Conservation Ontario’s approach, to support municipal submission to the Environmental Registry of Ontario.

8.8 EPR-2025-12: Proposed Changes to Huron-Kinloss Regulation Mapping

Motion #G25-83

Moved by Larry Allison

Seconded by Kevin Eccles

THAT the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority approves the proposed changes to the Huron-Kinloss Regulation Mapping.

Carried

Staff presented the proposed updates to the Huron-Kinloss regulation mapping, completed in accordance with Ontario Regulation 41/24 and supported by federal FHIMP funding. Updated flood hazard mapping for seven watercourses, based on new LiDAR data and peer-reviewed modelling, allows SVCA to shift from broad Screening Area mapping to more precise Regulated Area mapping. Extensive public engagement occurred from 2023 to 2025, including mailed notices, door-to-door outreach, media releases, digital communication and three public meetings, with strong attendance and constructive feedback.

The proposed updates result in a net reduction of approximately 25.37 hectares of land requiring SVCA review and replace 71 hectares of Screening Area with refined Regulated Area, which will improve review efficiency. Draft mapping for the Pine River is available only for the section west of Lake Range Drive, with the eastern section expected in 2026. If approved, staff will begin using the new mapping immediately and will update SVCA and Bruce County GIS platforms.

Director Stewart raised concern regarding changes to shoreline management beyond the 100-year flood event level. Manager Armstrong confirmed that the 100-year event remains the standard benchmark and explained that the increase relates to dynamic beaches which account for approximately 40 percent of shoreline within SVCA boundaries. It was noted that under O.Reg. 41/24, which established a single regulation for all conservation authorities, SVCA was required to add an additional fifteen metre allowance to dynamic beaches reflect provincial direction.

Director Allison observed that the recent Huron Kinloss delegation had conflated SVCA 2025 regulation mapping updates with the 2024 provincial changes to shoreline regulation and reiterated that the delegation remains focused on reducing the provincially mandated fifteen metre shoreline buffer.

It was noted that the delegation stated SVCA requires the use of SVCA approved or mandated contractors. Staff confirmed this is not the case and that applicants may use any qualified professional. Directors inquired about insurance implications, and staff explained that insurance companies set their own rates and rely on their own risk mapping and calculations, which can be significantly more stringent than SVCA standards. Staff reiterated that the fifteen metre shoreline change did not originate from SVCA but was required through provincial regulation changes.

8.9 EPR-2025-13: Status of Active Violations

Staff reported that as of November 3, 2025, there are 44 active violation files, compared with 54 in April 2025. Most files fall within categories involving activities unlikely or likely to cause significant damage, and no files are rated in the highest risk category. Two violation matters are before Provincial Offences Court; one has recently been resolved and the other is awaiting a trial date. Staff continue to resolve files through compliance approvals and site remediation where possible.

Director Prenger asked that future reports include plus and minus values to show changes by category, as the current report provides only net totals. It was also noted that the violations policy can be reviewed to incorporate considerations for repeat offenders if directed by the Board. Staff noted that SVCA aims for voluntary compliance wherever possible, as hearings and court proceedings are costly for both the Authority and the individuals involved. Chair noted an interest to revisit and receive a staff update on SVCA Violation Strategy's approach to repeat violators.

8.10 WR-2025-09: 2024 Water Quality Annual Report

Staff presented the 2024 Water Quality Annual Report and noted that certain exceedances, such as nitrogen, reflect a single sampling moment, which reinforces the importance of long-term trend data. Directors asked about the sources of exceedances. Manager Thomas explained that the Water Quality Program's role is to monitor and collect data, to examine trends at a watershed scale, and that staff could pursue point source evaluation if resources were made available.

8.11 Other Business – none

9. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m. following a motion by Moiken Penner and seconded by Sue Paterson.

Tom Hutchinson
Chair

Ashley Richards
Recording Secretary