

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS VIDEO-CONFERENCE

Mississippi Valley Conservation Centre
Carleton Place

MINUTES

June 17, 2020

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING:

J. Mason, Chair
G. Gower, Vice-Chair;
J. Atkinson;
F. Campbell;
T. Fritz;
B. Holmes;
J. Inglis;
J. Karau;
W. King;
P. Kehoe;
C. Lowry;
P. Sweetnam;
K. Thompson.

MEMBERS UNAVAILABLE:

E. Burke;
R. Darling;
E. El-Chantiry;
G. McEvoy.

STAFF PRESENT:

S. McIntyre, General Manager;
A. Millar, Treasurer;
S. Gutoskie, Community Relations Coordinator;
M. Craig, Manager, Planning and Regulations;
J. Cunderlik, Director, Water Resource Engineering;
R. Fergusson; Operations Supervisor;
J. North, Water Resources Technologist;
E. Levi, Recording-Secretary.

OTHERS PARTICIPATING:

E. Blenkarn, Masters Student, Ottawa University.

J. Mason called the teleconference to order at 1:08 p.m.

B06/17/20-1

MOVED BY: F. Campbell

SECONDED BY: P. Sweetnam

Resolved, That the Agenda for the June 17, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting be adopted.

“CARRIED”

1. Watershed Condition and Outlook

J. North advised that flows in the main system are slightly below normal due to the earlier and less predominant spring, and below average rainfall over the past few months. Crotch Lake levels are on par with historical averages. The drawdown on Crotch Lake was started early to maintain recreational levels downstream given the below average levels. Weather conditions are not yet indicative of a

drought, but could become so if current dry trends continue. The long-range forecast indicates slightly above average temperatures with near normal rainfall for the summer months.

2. Carp River University of Ottawa Study

Elizabeth Blenkarn, Masters student in Environmental Sustainability with the University of Ottawa, gave a presentation outlining a capstone seminar project carried out in partnership with MVCA and Ottawa Eco-Talent Network: *An Integrated Watershed Management Assessment of the Carp River Restoration Project* that focused on low impact development and green infrastructure.

G. Gower expressed his desire to help facilitate the role of citizen science and engagement within the City with regards to the Carp River. He also offered to take the lead within the City to clarify existing roles and responsibilities with regard to the Carp River Restoration.

J. Karau offered continued support for the project from the Ottawa Eco-Talent Network.

3. Carp River Living Classroom Update

J. Mason updated the board on the Carp River Living Classroom, which is to be a new conservation area within the Carp River restoration area located west of Terry Fox Drive and north of the Queensway. It features paved walking paths, wet meadows, a habitat pond and native trees and shrubs. She noted it was a multi-year project with immediate plans for the site include signage and a July launch of “EcoTrekr,” a free, GIS-enabled app that helps visitors understand and engage with what they are seeing through an encyclopedia of plants, wildlife, geographical features and historical notes. Future plans include on-site curriculum-based education programs and the construction of an education hub. Fundraising efforts are being supported by Marianne Wilkinson and Michael Cleland, and \$60,000 has been raised to date with more funding partnerships anticipated as the site develops. A draft agreement has been prepared between MVCA and the City outlining roles and responsibilities of all parties. S McIntyre confirmed that the draft agreement is being reviewed by legal counsel and will likely be brought to the Board at the next meeting.

J. Karau asked about using the EcoTrekr app at other conservation areas. J. Mason advised that the app would require loading a new encyclopedia per location. The details would have to be confirmed with the developers.

P. Sweetnam asked about the cost to develop the EcoTrekr application and what the costs would be to expand its application to other areas. S. McIntyre confirmed it was under \$30,000 and future additions should not be as costly since the structure of the application is already in place; however, it should also be recognized that a significant amount of development time was *pro bono*.

4. Approval of Minutes – Board of Directors Meeting May 20, 2020

B06/17/20-2

MOVED BY: P. Kehoe

SECONDED BY: J. Atkinson

Resolved, That the Minutes of the Mississippi Valley Board of Directors meeting held on May 20, 2020 be received and approved as printed.

“CARRIED”

5. Business Arising - Outcome of 2019 WECI Grant Application

S. McIntyre reviewed attached staff report #3059/20 advising the Board that none of the authority's projects submitted this year were approved for WECI funding. She advised only a fraction of the applications received funding due to program oversubscription. Further direction is required from the Board to address this systemic problem in underfunding.

To encourage increased provincial funding and ensure stimulus program availability to CAs, S. McIntyre recommended that MVCA reinforce key messages conveyed by Conservation Ontario, the WECI Committee, and the Special Advisor on Flooding by writing Ministers and local members of provincial and federal government; and encourage local councils to do likewise through letters to MVCA member municipalities.

J. Inglis asked whether the authority is able borrow money for these capital projects. A. Millar advised that it was possible to borrow using a debenture. It would require a host and there are only certain avenues authorities can borrow from, but it is a possibility.

J. Mason noted that the 10-year capital plan approved by the Board relied on WECI funding, so the plan would have to be revisited. S. McIntyre advised that the Finance and Administration Advisory Committee will discuss the impact of this on the 10-year plan and report back to the board at a future meeting.

B06/17/20-3

MOVED BY: T. Fritz

SECONDED BY: K. Thompson

Resolved, That the Board direct staff to:

- 1. Write the Minister of Natural Resources & Forestry and area Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) regarding funding of the WECI program and the need for improvements as recommended by the WECI Committee in its letter dated April 23, 2020 and by Doug McNeil, Ontario's Special Advisor on Flooding in his Final Report to the Premier.**
- 2. Write federal ministers and area Members of Parliament (MPs) endorsing the letter sent by Conservation Ontario (CO) regarding the need for federal stimulus funding dated May 28, 2020 in partnership with Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) and South Nation Conservation (SNC).**
- 3. Share the above letters with member municipalities and county councils and encourage them to support this initiative.**
- 4. Prepare an analysis of past WECI grant applications and funded projects and develop and updated strategy for grant submission in 2021.**
- 5. Prepare a report for the Finance & Administration Committee that contains:**
 - o methodology for prioritizing MVCA capital projects**
 - o potential grant opportunities**
 - o alternative funding approaches with potential impacts on the 10-year capital program**

“CARRIED”

6. Shabomeka Dam – Rehabilitation Project Update

J. Cunderlik reviewed Staff Report #3060/20, attached, summarizing the main advantages and disadvantages including cost implications of two design options for replacement of the Shabomeka Lake Dam: a stoplog gate and a mechanical gate design. The capital cost difference between the two systems is approximately \$200,000 (or 20%). However, given lower operation and maintenance costs, there may be long term savings potential due to less frequent trips and less staff time.

J. Cunderlik explained that MVCA has an obligation to consider future operational needs to make sure the dam has the functionality required over time. The mechanical bascule gate provides several advantages over the stoplog gate as it provides precise water level regulation, can support frequent and automated operation, requires reduced operation and maintenance in the field, and offers safe operating procedures. In contrast, stoplog gates are best suited to infrequent operation due to their high operation requirements, provide imprecise water regulation, and their operation can pose greater health and safety risks. He noted the manual operation can be easily retrofitted for remote operation in the future once the supporting automation system is in place.

J. Karau asked why the manual bascule was recommend over the automated. J. Cunderlik advised that although the cost difference between them is minimal, it's important to ensure the new bascule system functionality before committing to automation. He noted it can be easily retrofitted for automation at a later date. J. Karau expressed preference to install an automated system at the onset to avoid future cost increases to the retrofit.

There was discussion regarding the timing of the project and when it would have to be funded and completed. S. McIntyre noted that as it was in the design stage, the Board needs to provide direction only as to the preferred design. A financing plan will be discussed at a future meeting. The board directed Staff to provide it with a financial and technical analysis for moving from a manual to remotely operated system when the project returns to the board for approval. P. Sweetnam requested and J. Karau agreed that the completion date for the project be deleted from the motion until the financing plan has been proposed.

B06/17/20-4

MOVED BY: T. Fritz

SECONDED BY: J. Karau

Resolved, That the Board direct MVCA staff to:

- a) Complete detailed design of the Shabomeka Lake Dam water control structure using a manually operated mechanical (bascule) gate for water level regulation;**
- b) Commence regular monthly inspections of the Shabomeka Lake Dam as described in this report until construction begins; and**
- c) Develop a financing plan to ensure completion of the Shabomeka Lake Dam rehabilitation.**

“CARRIED”

7. Summer Work Plan and COVID-19 Status Update

S. McIntyre gave a presentation in regard to Staff Report 3061/20, attached. She outlined how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting MVCA and the actions being taken to mitigate operational and financial impacts while ensuring business continuity, and employee and public health and safety. She also presented alternative programming in light of government and health unit restrictions to obtain Board approval for their funding. Specifically, a new stewardship and outreach initiative has been developed which will inform the public about the watershed, engage residents and visitors in discussing watershed issues relevant to them while on or near water and encourage and support lake residents to participate in monitoring their lake using a Water Rangers kit.

S. McIntyre advised that, at this time, the authority's budget is projected be impacted by a net loss of \$90,645 by year end due to COVID-19 accounting for additional costs, lost revenues and cost savings.

B06/17/20-5

MOVED BY: P. Sweetnam

SECONDED BY: J. Atkinson

Resolved, That the Board approve:

- 1. Reallocation of up to \$5,100 in unspent funds from the monitoring and education programs to enable delivery of an enhanced stewardship and outreach program.**
- 2. Introduction of a new wedding rental rate of \$250 for parties of 10 or fewer.**

“CARRIED”

8. Interim Financial Update

A. Millar presented Staff Report #3062/20 (attached) to provide a comparison of year-to-date expenditures and revenues to the approved 2020 Budget and to provide an update to the Q1 Budget Control Report provided to the Board in April 2020. She noted that this report differs slightly from the financial data provided in the COVID-19 status report presented by S. McIntyre because the Financial Update accounts for the entire operation of the authority, not just COVID-related impacts.

A. Millar advised that the projected deficit is currently \$74,015.00. She noted that while the deficit is a concern there are adequate funds in the operating reserve that may be used to offset the deficit, which would be an appropriate use of this reserve particularly under current circumstances.

9. Appointment of Emma Deyo as an Officer to Enforce Section 28 Regulations

M. Craig reviewed Staff Report #3063/20, attached. Due to workload demands and compliance obligations, M. Craig recommended that additional enforcement staff be designated in accordance with Section 10 of *O.Reg. 153/06* wherein the authority may appoint officers to enforce the Regulation. Emma Deyo has recently completed the Conservation Authority Compliance Training – Level 1. This course provides the basic foundation for Conservation Authority staff to acquire the skills, knowledge and behaviors required to be appointed as a Provincial Offences Officer to enforce and monitor compliance under Section 28 and 29 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. Ms. Deyo will work under the guidance of Regulations Officer A. Moore, and assist in addressing violations and compliance of permits.

B06/17/20-6

MOVED BY: K. Thompson

SECONDED BY: P. Kehoe

Resolved, That the Board of Directors appoint Emma Deyo to enforce Ontario Regulation 153/06 and Ontario Regulation 120/90 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

“CARRIED”

10. County of Frontenac Proposal – Septic Services

S. McIntyre presented the attached Staff Report # 3064/20 regarding the opportunity to expand the Mississippi-Rideau Septic System Office program to meet the septic permit and inspection needs of communities currently served by the Kingston Frontenac Lennox & Addington Health Unit (KFL&AHU) in partnership with Cataraqui River Conservation Authority (CRCA) and Quinte Conservation (QC). Upon approval by the Board, MVCA in partnership with RVCA, CRCA and QC will submit the service proposal to one or more municipalities currently serviced by the KFL&AHU and report back to the Board with the results.

J. Inglis commented that the mandatory inspections currently taking place in Central Frontenac may potentially take up to 10 years to complete. He questioned whether MVCA could keep up with more demand. S. McIntyre advised it was the hope to be able to do so by partnering up with other CAs; and that while across the CAs additional staff would likely be required, it is a full-cost recovery program.

P. Sweetnam acknowledged his support as long as the program is offered at total cost recovery.

B06/17/20-7

MOVED BY: P. Sweetnam

SECONDED BY: J. Inglis

Resolved, That the Board authorize staff to offer and provide septic system services on a full cost-recovery basis to areas currently serviced by the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Health Unit in partnership with other conservation authorities.

“CARRIED”

11. Watershed Plan Public Advisory Committee Engagement Update

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

12. Canada Wildlife Services – Operation Support at Mississippi Lake National Wildlife Area

S. McIntyre reviewed Staff Report #3065/20, attached. She informed the Board of on-going negotiations with Canada Wildlife Services (CWS) to provide operational and maintenance (O&M) support at the Mississippi Lake National Wildlife Area.

She advised that CWS is reviewing MVCA’s cost estimate. Should MVCA’s price be accepted, management will negotiate and execute the agreement, inform the Board at the next scheduled meeting and commence providing this service to CWS on a full cost-recovery basis.

13. Bell Canada Easement Renewal

S. McIntyre presented Staff Report #3066/20, attached, regarding on-going negotiations with a Bell Canada easement on the K&P Trail. The easement was last renewed in 2015 for a period of 5 years at a rate of \$1650/year. She noted staff have begun to review the easement agreement and intend to seek Cost of Living increases. Upon completion of the negotiations, staff will return to the Board.

14. Other Business

S. McIntyre advised that traditionally there is a Board meeting held in July and none in August. There is currently no other business to move forward at a July meeting. The members discussed options and it was decided no meeting was to be held in July or August, however a meeting can be arranged in August at the call of the Chair if any business arises.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

B06/17/20-8

MOVED BY: F. Campbell

SECONDED BY: C. Lowry

Resolved, That the Board of Directors meeting be adjourned.

“CARRIED”

“E. Levi, Recording Secretary

J. Mason, Chair”