



# *Muskoka*

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## WATERSHED COUNCIL

### Minutes

Friday, September 22, 2023  
1:00 pm  
Council Chambers (District of Muskoka) & Zoom

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#### Present (In-person)

Peter Sale (Chair)	Nancy Alcock	Andrew Fyfe
Peter Johnston	Pete LeMoine	Geoff Ross
Kevin Trimble		

#### Present (Zoom)

Mario Buszynski	David Bywater	Chris Cragg
Joan Frain	Richard Lammers	Don Macintosh
Sabrina Richards		

#### MWC Staff

Rebecca Willison

#### DMM Staff

Glenn Cunningham	Christy Doyle *
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#### Guests

Penny Thomas	Deb Marcellus *	Forrest Pengra *
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\* Attended by Zoom

#### Welcome

MWC Chair Peter Sale called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm with roundtable introductions. Peter then provided an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement.

Peter noted the numerous activities MWC has undertaken over the summer, including the development of the Muskoka Watershed Report Card, delegations to municipalities, carrying out the Love Your Lake program on Six Mile Lake, and producing an article series in The Muskokan newspaper.

#### Confirmation of Minutes

#### MOTION

Moved by Peter Johnston, seconded by Pete LeMoine

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated June 23, 2023, be approved.

**CARRIED**

## **Business Arising from the Minutes**

- None.

## **2023 Muskoka Watershed Report Card**

Peter Sale provided an update on the release of the [2023 Muskoka Watershed Report Card](#) that took place on Monday, September 18<sup>th</sup> at the Muskoka Discovery Centre. The event was attended by approximately 75 people, including many municipal councillors. He emphasized the wealth of information included in the [Background Report](#), specifically encouraging everyone read the [Ecosystem Integrity](#) chapter to gain an understanding of the need to better manage our environment and what some of the challenges are.

Report Card Sub-committee members are being asked to develop some communications pieces to keep the Report Card in the news for the coming months. The Sub-committee is going to become a standing committee of MWC and will meet a couple of times a year to keep working slowly on the next report card.

## **MWC Strategic Plan**

The final copy of the MWC [Strategic Plan \(2023-2028\)](#) was distributed with the agenda and reviewed by Pete LeMoine and Geoff Ross at the meeting. Geoff introduced the process and intent of the document, and Pete thanked a number of people who have contributed to the document, especially Karen Maxwell, who started the process before the pandemic, and Kate Monk, who provided a lot of guidance.

Pete put out a call for people interested in becoming a director.

Geoff highlighted the three goals that MWC wants to achieve over the next five years:

1. Communications, Stewardship and Awareness.
2. Policy and Advocacy
3. Enhanced Watershed-Wide Knowledge Base

Geoff reviewed the tactics that have been identified to accomplish each goal and highlighted several ways that MWC members and volunteers can get involved. All members are encouraged to identify where they can contribute to the work of MWC.

- Peter Johnston would like to volunteer but he is unsure where his skillset can be the most useful. He would like to help with the Communications portfolio – taking the messages that we develop and delivering them to small communities around Muskoka.
- Pete is interested in developing projects that high school students can help with to earn their volunteer hours. He wants to get more young people involved in MWC activities.

Pete reviewed the three goals that relate specifically to the Board of Directors and Geoff noted the need for more funding to tackle larger initiatives like Integrated Watershed Management (IWM).

MWC's new mission statement is "to empower the community to protect and enhance watershed health".

## **MOTION**

Moved by Pete LeMoine, seconded by Nancy Alcock

THAT the MWC Strategic Plan (2023-2028) be adopted.

**CARRIED**

## **IWM Conference for Municipalities**

Peter Sale announced the plan to organize a one-day conference for municipal councillors and staff on Integrated Watershed Management. The conference will take place on February 9, 2024 at the Bracebridge Sportsplex. Volunteers are needed to help with identifying and recruiting speakers, promotion and registration, catering, and other logistics.

Mayor Nancy Alcock suggested that the conference include clarification about what DMM does with IWM versus area municipalities.

There are also plans to hold a 2-day conference in fall 2024 on IWM for the general public.

## **Project Updates**

- **Integrated Watershed Management** – Kevin Trimble is pleased that IWM has moved from a side project that MWC was involved in to being the major focus of MWC for the foreseeable future. He reported that the CRT had an in-person workshop to develop recommendations on next steps. A report is being developed based on the results of the workshop and it will be used to structure discussions with DMM and other municipalities. These recommendations will be presented to the District's Community and Planning Services Committee on October 19<sup>th</sup>.

Kevin noted that the CRT has a core group of 15-20 meeting participants and several additional people who attend less frequently. The core group has been very active. The membership of the CRT has been evolving and will continue to evolve to reach all sectors of the community.

- **Algae Monitoring Program** – Peter Sale reported that participating lake associations will be wrapping up the field sampling for the program and will need to analyze their samples and submit their results by the end of November. The final report is scheduled to be released early in 2024. Peter noted that the program is self-funding through a subscription model.

## **Partner Updates**

- **Town of Gravenhurst** – Councillor Peter Johnston thanked Pete LeMoine for his excellent presentation to Gravenhurst council earlier in the week. He noted that there was some confusion about what IWM is and how it differs from what is already being done. Peter took Report Cards to the Gravenhurst Library to hand out and asked them to put it on their website, as well.
- **Muskoka Lakes Association** – Chris Cragg reported that sampling has been completed for the season and a report is forthcoming. Chris appreciates the information in the Report Card and how it supports the efforts of the MLA.

- **MNRF** - Kevin Trimble reported that he and Peter Sale met with MNRF Minister Grayden Smith about IWM and it was a very positive meeting. Amanda Vincent has been identified as a liaison between MWC and MNRF. MWC would also like to coordinate better with other ENGOs to provide messaging to the public and municipalities that we all work together, not competitively.

### **New Business**

- **Communications** – The joint MWC/CRT Communications Committee has met a couple of times. A number of new people have joined the Committee and Pete is pleased with the direction the committee is going in. More volunteers are still needed. Kevin Trimble highlighted the very successful article series in The Muskokan over the summer organized and edited by Neil Hutchinson.
- Peter would like feedback on how the Zoom worked for those who joined the meeting online.

### **Next MWC Meeting**

MWC's next meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> and will take place in Council Chambers at the District of Muskoka administration building, located at 70 Pine Street in Bracebridge.

### **Adjournment**

Peter Sale adjourned the meeting at 2:30 pm.