

Full Authority
24 February 2023
Agenda Item: 12

General Manager's Report

Background

The General Manager's report provides a brief update for the Board Members prior to the Board meeting bringing forward additional information and/or progress on initiatives or current issues for the Board members' consideration.

Watershed Management

Current Watershed Conditions

- Water levels and flows have remained consistently higher than normal due to recent rainfall and higher than average temperatures in February.
- Flow conditions at the Marmora Dam are approximately 40 cubic meters per second.
- Multiple stop log adjustments have been made recently. In addition, staff have made adjustments to the Orillia Power Plant located at the Marmora Dam.
- While the increased flow due to rain and snowmelt has resulted in extra work for staff, the increased flow rate at the Marmora Dam allows the Orillia Power Plant to operate at higher capacity levels. This will bode well for the company's revenues and the CVCA's share of the revenue if certain thresholds are met. Higher flows in the winter will help to attain those targets.
- In addition, there will be some release of stored water in the system, which depending on future weather conditions may help to alleviate the effects of the spring freshet.

Anticipated Conditions

- Depending on predicted precipitation and whether there will be a return to normal weather patterns and conditions for this part of the winter, staff are not anticipating a substantial increase in water levels and flows in the short term.

- As a result, no flooding is anticipated in the watershed in the foreseeable future.
- Staff will continue to monitor weather conditions, lake levels and flows as part of the normal daily flood forecast and warning cycle.

Water Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Status

An amending agreement has been signed with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry regarding the 2022-23 Marmora Dam Repairs Project. The project came in under budget and the agreement was necessary to reflect that change. The CVCA will realize savings of approximately \$10,750.

I have taken the liberty to submit four (4) projects to the WECI Committee prior to the approval of the CVCA budget since the deadline for the submissions was the 17th of February 2023. The projects submitted did not exceed the amount included in the Draft 2023 Budget. The projects include the following:

Wollaston Dam – Safety Line Repair
Belmont Dam – Stare/Walkway Installation/Repair
Belmont Dam – Storage Box Installation
Marmora Dam – Storage Box Installation

Total Projects Estimated Cost = \$49,000

Dam Operations – General

- Additional stop logs were recently delivered to the Cordova Dam by the Ministry of Natural Resources. CVCA staff assisted with placing them on the dam.

Conservation Areas Update

Callaghan's Rapids Conservation Area

- CVCA lead volunteer for Callaghan's has contacted myself to initiate discussions for 2023 projects. Funding for these projects will rely upon donations received by the CVCA.

Crowe Bridge Conservation Area

- Please refer to the Crowe Bridge Weir Assessment

The Gut Conservation Area

- No further updates at this time.

McGeachie Conservation Area

- Informal conversations have occurred with Hastings County staff to assist with the cleanup at McGeachie.
- Additional assistance was offered by Wollaston Township to follow up with possible help from our local MPP.
- Further updates to included at our April meeting.

Regulations and Planning Program and Services

Although the CVCA Draft 2023 Budget will not accommodate an increase for additional staffing and technical resources to assist with the reduction of response times for permits and property inquiries, CVCA staff are committed to review the program to look for efficiencies to assist with the reduction of wait times. The CVCA recognizes there is always room for improvement.

Internal factors that can be controlled and will be implemented include the following:

1. Revamped the application form to help ensure all of the correct information is received in a timely, orderly and legible format. This will assist with communication efforts between the applicant and CVCA staff which will eliminate time consuming back and forth messaging.
2. Revamped the Property Inquiries process with the internal reallocation of a CVCA staff person for that portion of the program
3. Re-evaluating the inquiries to ensure the correct staff resources are allocated appropriately.
4. Will review the permit process.
5. Streamlined the triage process.
6. Improved tracking procedures.
7. Meet with applicants as much as possible on site during the pre-consultation stage.

8. Pilot Project to meet with Building Officials as soon as possible to explore areas where assistance can be provided and better understand each other's requirements.
9. Improve Planning communications – meet with planning staff similar to the above noted pilot project.

Administration Update

Board of Directors and Officers Liability Insurance Synopsis

Please see the attached for the Board's consideration.

Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program (FHIMP)

Verbal update to be provided.

Transition Plan - Program and Service Inventory

The CVCA will be reaching out to the member municipalities to further discuss the MOU requirements, the effects of Bill 23 and implications of new and pending Provincial regulations.

Briefly, the effects of Bill 23 are very limited in scope for the CVCA since this authority was already at the "base level" in terms of comments and reviews. The CVCA never provided comments regarding natural heritage issues or concerns, rather the Authority always focused on natural hazards.

At the moment, without any further changes, it is business as usual.

Staff are hopeful to begin requesting delegations for meetings with member municipalities staff and/or Councils beginning in mid-March.

Audit – 2022 Financial Statement

Dan Coleman at Welch LLP will be conducting the 2022 Financial Audit and preparing the financial statements. The target date is to have the statements completed and ready for the Board's review at the April Board meeting.

Office Reopening

Background

- The CVCA office closed to the public almost immediately following the confirmation of the COVID pandemic.
- This action was taken for a number of reasons and remains in effect to date for the primary reason to protect an organization which has a small number of staff, which is responsible for emergency messaging from the office to the public, member municipalities, the media and emergency services. In addition, staff are also responsible for the physical stop log manipulations at a number of dams throughout the CVCA watershed. Should even a few select CVCA staff become ill at the inappropriate time and unable to work or end up spreading COVID to the remaining staff, the CVCA would not be able to perform their duties. As an emergency agency, the risk to public safety cannot be compromised. This concern was especially true in the early stages of COVID.
- Throughout all of the stages of COVID, all of the programs and services of the CVCA have been made available to the public and our member municipalities.
- Permit applications could still be submitted to the Authority by online submissions, mail, or the use of a drop box.
- Communication was still viable through telephone or email. Personal meetings were still being held on site.
- If someone did show up to the office and wished to speak directly to any staff member, they were not denied the opportunity.

The CVCA recognizes the public wishes to have access to the office. As such, the CVCA plans to open its door to the public with certain within a short time period after the spring freshet has begun to recede. At that time, the public may enter the building with minimal restrictions as the CVCA takes steps to return as close as possible to pre-COVID conditions.

The CVCA will implement the following:

1. Request the public respect the attempt to maintain everyone's health and minimize the spread of COVID by wearing a mask if they are able to do so.
2. As well, access within the office will be restricted to the front foyer.
3. The CVCA will also be introducing an appointment system for the public to ensure staff will be on site.

COVID has simply not "gone away". It is and continues to be a threat, especially as new sub variants are discovered. As well, the long term effects of COVID will be an issue for years to come.

Miscellaneous

- The CVCA recently requested assistance from the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority to help with the CVCA's mapping software and hardware issues and problems which have been affecting our mapping capabilities. Without making changes and improvements to the system, the overall capabilities have been hampered which directly contributes to inefficiencies and ultimately affects permit reviews.
- As a result of these compounding issues, the LTRCA agreed to share their GIS (geographical information systems) technician with the CVCA. Good progress was made with a number of changes. However, there is more work to be done and the LTRCA is willing to allow their technician to return to the CVCA for another day's worth of work.
- While the aid from the LTRCA is greatly appreciated and is typical of conservation authorities helping each other with their expertise (which the CVCA has reciprocated whenever possible), the Board may want to consider a regular maintenance schedule for the 2024 Budget. Ideally, the CVCA would have a GIS Technician to conduct this work and other primary functions to assist with the Regulations and Planning program.

Staff Recommendation

That the Board receive the General Manager's Report as submitted.

Board Decision

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