

**Minutes of the Otter Lake Ratepayers' Association (OLRA) Board Meeting
Thursday, January 25, 2024**

Attendees: David Amy (joined the meeting at 1:48 pm), Martin Chepesiuk, Brad Chittick (joined the meeting at 1:42 pm) , Rob Cribbie, Gerry Doyle, Brian Hindley (left the meeting at 4:03 pm), Nicole Mailloux (left the meeting at 4:03 pm), AJ Mueller, Kerry Mueller

1. Welcome: Kerry Mueller started the Zoom meeting at 1:37 pm. Quorum was confirmed.

Kerry Mueller informed the Board that Gerry Doyle has submitted his resignation, effective the date of the 2024 AGM, but has volunteered to complete the work relating to the member survey. Board members thanked Gerry for his service and work on the Board, and Gerry also thanked the Board.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests: None were declared.

3. Treasurer's Report: AJ Mueller noted that all expenses are journalized in detail on Google Drive for Martin Chepesiuk, the Vice-President, to see. He then went over the submitted year end statements and reports. (Brad Chittick joined the meeting at 1:42 pm).

- December 31st, 2023 Financial Year End vs Budget: Net Income was \$732.77 vs the expected budgeted loss of **(\$1,344.00)**. This profit was due to David and Dianne Amy's generous donation of \$1,000.00 and GIC Interest Income. Total Revenues were \$15,692.26 (vs \$13,650.00) and Total Expenses were \$14,959.49 (vs \$14,994.00). The largest fixed cost is Insurance. Other large costs are Benthic Monitoring and eDNA Monitoring.
- 2023 membership final numbers: There were 184 families represented and 295 additional family members for a total of 479 members.
- 2024 membership renewals to date: In 2024, there are 50 families and 72 additional family members to date.

Motion: To approve the Year End Statements as presented.

- Moved by Gerry Doyle
- Seconded by Rob Cribbie
- **Motion carried**

4. Stewardship Report: Brian Hindley provided a verbal update. The assessment of the eDNA results from 2023 are on the OLRA website. Our 2023 eDNA results identified 21 species. When you look at the combined eDNA results from 2022 and 2023 there are 27

species identified, without harming any fish, the most number ever reported in any monitoring program completed to date. (David Amy joined the meeting at 1:48 pm)

New Business:

1. Public Parking at the Marina: Kerry Mueller provided a verbal update. There is not much to report other than the No Parking signs continue to be covered up. Seguin Township could uncover the signs now that the ice is coming in but due to snow build up, little parking in that area is available now.

2. Proposed Lake Stewardship Initiatives for 2024: Brian Hindley provided a written list of programs which have been ongoing and suggestions of new programs. Here are the main points that were discussed.

- The ongoing programs are:
 - a) the annual Lake Partner Program which is part of a larger MOECP provincial lake program, does not cost OLRA anything, but requires OLRA Board members to volunteer their time, boat, etc.;
 - b) the biannual Embayment Dissolved Oxygen Profile Monitoring Program, which measures dissolved Oxygen in 6 back bays to assess the potential of algal blooms, does not cost OLRA anything, but requires OLRA Board members to volunteer their time, boat, etc.;
 - c) the annual Bugs in the Mud Benthic Invertebrate Monitoring Program which partners with GBB and Seguin Township, and compares changes over time and with about 50 Muskoka area lakes. OLRA pays for one sample and Seguin Township pays for two samples. OLRA Board members volunteer their time and boat, as required and GBB provide staff and equipment for sampling, identification, analysis and reporting which is built into the cost of the sampling. As well, the GGB staff provide a year end overview Aquatic Environment Report drawing together the results of all water and fish studies on our lakes.
- More recent programs are.
 - eDNA is a biodiversity program which was completed in 2022 and 2023. This is no longer just a new untested method of sampling lake biodiversity, but one that is being used more and more by Professionals conducting environmental work because of its ability to capture a broad range of species without harming them. It is OLRA's most expensive program, but does require OLRA Board members to volunteer time, boat, etc. Kerry Mueller generously volunteered the 3 sample kits she and AJ independently paid for eDNA work in 2024, if required. For 2024, ideas included scaling back, sampling the most biodiverse part of the lake, sampling near the dam for invasive species, etc.
 - FOCA (eDNA) Invasive Species program which involves one sample to test for invasive plants, does not cost OLRA anything, but requires OLRA Board members to volunteer time, boat, etc. It's unknown if this program will be repeated.
- The challenge is the ability to fund all these programs. Ideas for funding included:
 - Moving to a Watershed Approach that would include other lakes such as Salmon Lake.

- GBB has indicated that grants might be available for stewardship type projects such as control of invasive species, clean-ups, etc.
- Developing a funding mechanism where half the cost would be paid by a property owner to sample off their property shoreline, or some other funding formula.
- Corporate Sponsorships for specific projects.
- Some OLRA members may want to volunteer to fund raise.
- Growing OLRA's membership by asking members to approach non-members.
- Raising OLRA's membership fees
- Programs that could continue are the “ongoing” programs e.g. the Lake Partner Program, the Embayment Dissolved Oxygen Profile Program, the Benthic Program, and the FOCA eDNA program (assuming it will be done again). The benthic program and year end reporting is costly.
- A written Strategy Plan is needed, with Goals and KPI's, that answers not only the “what”, but also “how” all the proposed programs work together, and the “why”.

Motion: To continue the Committee with the aim to get a report for the AGM with goals and objectives for ongoing monitoring of the lake.

- Moved by Brian Hindley
- Seconded by Rob Cribbie
- **Motion carried**

Actions: The existing Strategic Plan Committee with Brian Hindley, Kerry Mueller and Martin Chepesiuk will continue their work with the goal of presenting a Strategic Plan for the OLRA Board's review by March/April for the May AGM. Other OLRA members with environmental specialities may be approached to volunteer on this Committee.

3.OLRA 2024 Foley Community Centre Family BBQ planning – Committee Updates:

Kerry Mueller leads the Food Committee and Martin Chepesiuk leads the Activities Committee. A thank you goes to volunteers, Naama Levy-Cooperman, Maureen Bot and Barbara Beecroft who attended the first joint meeting with other Board members. Tony and Margaret Busynski also volunteered on food related items on August 10. Here are some highlights of the discussion:

- A draft for food and costs has been completed e.g. burgers, hot dogs, etc.
- Activities could include face painting, basketball, bean bags, contest for children and opportunity to display their projects.
- There are 2 BBQ's at the Centre, and 3 more are needed. David Amy, Rob Cribbie and Kerry Mueller can donate use of their BBQ's. Rob Cribbie has a trailer and David Amy has a truck which could be used to transport the BBQ's.
- The event will go from noon to 3 pm on August 10th, rain or shine. The Rankin Lake Room has been booked for indoor activities, inside washrooms, and the kitchen.
- There may be an opportunity to get high school students to volunteer helping with children activities to complete their “volunteer hours”.
- A list needs to be made of who is needed on the day of and what we need for the BBQ and activities. More volunteers may be needed.

4. Survey of OLRA Membership for Ideas and Feedback – Next Steps:

a) Contacting of people who expressed interest in volunteering: 16 survey participants (including 2 Board members who expressed an interest on the survey) said they would like to volunteer. For the BBQ Committees, we have 6 Board members volunteering for the BBQ Committees (Martin Chepesiuk, Robert Cribbie, Brian Hindley, Nicole Mailloux, AJ Mueller and Kerry Mueller) and 5 OLRA members volunteering for the BBQ, either on Committees or on the Day of the BBQ. David Amy, Brad Chittick and Gerry Doyle also volunteered to be at the BBQ on August 10th to help out.

b) Contacting of people who expressed interest in becoming members on the survey: AJ Mueller will reach out to the 4 people.

c) Activities OLRA can promote/offer as per the survey results: Gerry Doyle identified activities he could explore: 1) Book Club potentially with the Foley Library which has its own Book Club, 2) Kayaking/canoeing/environment lake tour, potentially with White Squall. 3) Paddle Boarding Demonstration Day 4) Walking Club and 5) Biking Club . A sixth activity relating to native plants/shorelines/invasive plants was also identified as a top interest, and Nicole Mailloux will explore this activity e.g. Native Plant Nursery expert presentation, GGB native plant sale, tour of lake properties/shorelines that may have native plants, etc.

5. OLRA Annual Photo Contest Update: OLRA is looking for a volunteer to lead the contest in 2024. Board members should reach out to anyone who might be interested. Kerry Mueller will ask members in the next OLRA member communication.

6. Budget for 2024: AJ Mueller reviewed the highlights of the 2024 budget. Discussion highlights included:

- Net Income is budgeted at \$646.00, with Total Revenues of \$12,932.00 and Total Expenses of \$12,286.00.
- A discussion took place relating to how to increase Revenue. Board members should reach out to businesses, including competing businesses, to advertise their businesses. Details are on the website.
- Website Hosting, which is not an annual expense, is budgeted at \$1,500.00.
- The pros and cons of keeping Benthic Monitoring, the largest expense, were discussed. The prevailing opinion was to keep it in.
- The Budget for eDNA monitoring was scaled back significantly (\$1,450.00 in 2024 vs \$5,174.13 Actual in 2023), as it's unclear if work should be repeated in 2024 and any additional funding would result in a negative balance in the budget. Kerry Mueller is willing to donate her 3 sample kits for 2024, if required. The prevailing opinion was to leave it in at this cost level until the Strategic Plan Committee Report was prepared

Motion: To approve the 2024 Budget, as presented, subject to eDNA.

- Moved by Nicole Mailloux
- Seconded by Gerry Doyle
- **Motion carried**

7. Soliciting Water Testing Results from Otter Lake: Martin Chepesiuk reviewed his written proposals for 2024. These will be added to the list of possible projects/programs for the Strategic Plan committee to consider.

- Tap Lake Water Quality Data Base: The goal would be to keep a centralized data base of results of lake tap water quality testing. The request for data would be communicated in a newsletter and ask OLRA members for copies of their tap water testing, assuming the water comes from the lake (not a well), and ensuring all details regarding their filtration/UV systems is obtained.
- Lake Microplastics: Microplastics enter the lake water from various sources including rainwater, lost toys, cigarette butts, deteriorating Styrofoam floats, plastic bags, hand washing clothes in the lake, faulty septic systems, etc.
- PCB's in fish are also important. MNRF's fish tissue work is expected in 2024.

8. Newsletter Advertising: This item was covered by AJ Mueller under New Business Agenda Item #6.

9. Public Meeting Feb. 5th re: Boathouse application – Ritter: Kerry Mueller will prepare a letter for the Board's review that will emphasize that bylaws should be respected, one bunkie on the property, and concerns regarding the Type 1 habitat. The application's discrepancies and omissions were briefly discussed. Seguin Township clarified the bylaw and confirmed that a boathouse can't be built in an EP zone, which is Type 1 habitat.

10. Insurance Policy: David Amy asked AJ Mueller to send out the Insurance Policy for review of liability coverages to ensure the Policy is adequate.

(Nicole Mailloux, Secretary left the meeting at 4:03 and Kerry Mueller took over minute taking. Brian Hindley also left the meeting at 4:03.)

11. Spring 2024 Newsletter Planning: Board members should review the list for the articles they are responsible to write.

Kerry Mueller asked if there was any new business. There was none.

11. Adjournment: Kerry Mueller called the meeting to a close at 4:04 p.m.

ADDENDUM A

Email Business and Resolutions from October 26, 2023 to January 24, 2024

Motion: To approve the minutes of the December 5, 2023 OLRA Board meeting.

- Moved by Nicole Mailloux by email on December 20, 2023
- Seconded by Rob Cribbie by email on December 20, 2023
- **Motion carried** by email on December 21, 2023

Motion: To approve the minutes of the October 25, 2023 OLRA Board meeting.

- Moved by Nicole Mailloux by email on October 25, 2023
- Seconded by Gerry Doyle by email on October 25, 2023
- **Motion carried** by email on November 9, 2023

Acronyms

- AGM: Annual General Meeting
- ATV: All-Terrain Vehicle
- Cl: Chloride (salt)
- dB: decibel
- DC: Decibel Coalition
- DFO: Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- DO: Dissolved Oxygen
- EP: Environmental Protection
- FOCA: Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association
- FOI: Freedom of Information
- GBB: Georgian Bay Biosphere
- KPI: Key Performance Indicator
- LPP: Lake Protection Program
- MECP: Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
- MMAH: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)
- MNR: Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
- MZO: Ministerial Zoning Order
- OLRA: Otter Lake Ratepayers' Association
- OLT: Ontario Land Tribunal
- ONCA: Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act
- OP: Seguin Township Official Plan
- OPP: Ontario Provincial Police
- PCOC: Pleasure Craft Operator Card
- PFD: Personal Floatation Device
- PPS: Provincial Policy Statement
- PWC: Power Water Craft
- SAR: Species at Risk
- SQL: Safe Quiet Lakes
- SRA: Shoreline Allowance
- STA: Short Term Accommodation
- STR: Short Term Rental
- TC: Transport Canada
- WDALB: Where Does a Lake Begin