



BUDGET & ADMINISTRATION

June 25, 2026



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Budget & Administration Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 25, 2026 at 2:00 P.M.

This meeting will be held in a hybrid format via in person and via Webex Platform

All meetings can be viewed live on HCA's You Tube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/HamiltonConservation>

1. **Welcome** – Susan Fielding
2. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Delegations**
5. **Consent Items**
 - 5.1. Approval of Budget & Administration Committee Minutes – May 29, 2026 Page 1
6. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
7. **Staff Reports/Memorandums**

Reports for Recommendation

 - 7.1 2025 Reserve Balances & 2025 Accumulated Surplus Allocation – Scott Fleming Page 7
 - 7.2 2027 Budget Process and Year 3 Strategic Plan Initiatives – Lisa Burnside Page 11
 - 7.3 Legislative Minimum Wage Increase to HCA Casual Wage Rates – Marlene Ferreira Page 17

8. New Business

9. In-Camera Items

9.1. Confidential Report – BA/June 01-2026
(Security/Legal Matter)

9.2 Confidential Memorandum – BA/June 02-2026
(Legal Matter)

10. Next Meeting – Thursday, August 27, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

11. Adjournment

Hamilton Conservation Authority

Minutes

Budget & Administration Committee

May 29, 2026

Minutes of the Budget & Administration Committee meeting held on Friday, May 29, 2026 at 2:00 p.m., via Webex platform and live-streamed on HCA's YouTube channel

Present: Susan Fielding, in the Chair
Brad Clark
Alex Wilson

Regrets: Lisa DiCesare, Maureen Wilson

Staff Present: Nauman Chaundhry, Gord Costie, Scott Fleming, Rob Gray, Matt Hall, Amanda Martin, Scott Peck, Mike Stone, and Sandra Winner

Others Present: David Marks, KPMG

1. Welcome

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present.

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

The Chair asked members to declare any conflicts under the HCA Administrative By-law. There were none.

3. Approval of Agenda

The Chair requested any additions or deletions to the agenda.

Acting CAO Scott Peck advised that that an addendum was circulated, 2025 12-month Financial Results – Audited Financial Statements and was addressed under item number 8, Staff Reports/Memorandums, as item 8.2. Additionally, the 2025 Report by the Auditors was presented under item 8.1.

BA 2606

MOVED BY: Brad Clark

SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED

4. Delegations

There were none.

5. Election of Vice Chair

Susan Fielding opened the call for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Budget & Administration Committee for 2026. Alex Wilson expressed interest in the position.

Nominated: Alex Wilson

By-Mover: Brad Clark

Having no further nominations, the election for the office of Vice-Chair of the Budget & Administration Committee for 2026 was then closed and the position acclaimed with the following resolution:

BA 2607

MOVED BY: Brad Clark

SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding

THAT nominations for the 2026 Vice-Chair of HCA Budget and Administration Committee be closed and Alex Wilson be confirmed as Vice-Chair of the Hamilton Conservation Authority Budget & Administration Committee for 2026.

CARRIED

6. Consent Items

The following consent items were adopted:

6.1. Approval of Budget & Administration Committee Minutes – March 19, 2026

6.2. 2026 Annual Statistical Reporting for Freedom of Information Requests

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was none.

8. Staff Reports/Memoranda

Reports for Recommendation

8.1. 2025 Report by the Auditors

David Marks, Lead Audit Engagement Partner at KPMG, provided an overview of the document, highlighting the process taken by KPMG to complete the audit for the 2025 fiscal year and noting that there weren't any irregularities found during the audit process, and that the Audit Report indicated a clean audit.

**BA 2608 MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
 SECONDED BY: Brad Clark**

**THAT the Budget & Administration Committee recommends to
the Board of Directors:**

THAT the 2025 Report by the Auditors be approved

CARRIED

8.2. 2025 12-month Financial Results – Audited Financial Statements

David Marks provided a summary of the 2025 Audited Financial Statements, indicating that based on the findings, the HCA is in a sound financial position, having generated a \$1.6M surplus on the year, with an unallocated accumulated surplus of \$913,803. Additionally, the Financial Statements from Confederation Beach Park were reviewed, noting an annual deficit of \$25,893 for 2025.

**BA 2609 MOVED BY: Brad Clark
 SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson**

**THAT the Budget & Administration
Committee recommends to the Board of Directors:**

**THAT the 2025 Twelve-Month Audited Financial
Statements for Hamilton Conservation Authority and
Confederation Beach Park be approved**

CARRIED**Memorandums to be Received**8.3. **HCA General Insurance Renewal – 2026**

Scott Fleming provided an overview of the memorandum indicating that 2026 insurance premiums will increase as a result of an increase cost for property insurance; costs will rise by 24%.

BA 2610**MOVED BY: Brad Clark
SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson****THAT the Memorandum entitled HCA General Insurance
Renewal – 2026 be received.****CARRIED**8.4. **HCA 2026 1st Quarter Financial Results – Operating**

Scott Fleming provided an overview of the memorandum indicating that HCA sits at a surplus position for the first quarter of 2026, putting the HCA in a favourable position to begin the busy summer months.

BA 2611**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Brad Clark****THAT the Memorandum entitled HCA 2026 1st Quarter
Financial Results – Operating be received.****CARRIED**8.5. **HCA 1st Quarter Cumulated Financial Results – Capital and Major Maintenance**

Matt Hall provided an overview of the memorandum, highlighting the projects that occurred during the winter months, rebuilding the boardwalk at Valens, as well as planned projects for the spring.

In response to a question posed by Brad Clark, staff will provide a report to the Budget & Administration Committee at a future meeting regarding the impact of rising costs of diesel has on planned capital projects as well as any contingency plans to help mitigate this.

BA 2612**MOVED BY: Brad Clark
SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson****THAT the Memorandum entitled HCA 2026 1st Quarter**

Cumulated Financial Results – Capital & Major Maintenance be received.

CARRIED

8.6. HCA 1st Quarter Vendor Report

Scott Fleming provided an overview of the memorandum, which contained a summary of vendors and the amount paid to them during the first quarter of 2026.

BA 2613

**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Brad Clark**

THAT the Memorandum entitled HCA 1st Quarter Vendor Report be received.

CARRIED

8.7. 2025 Asset Disposition

Scott Fleming provided a summary of the memorandum which provides a summary of the assets that were disposed during the 2025 calendar year, noting that the disposal process complied with the HCA Purchasing Policy.

BA 2614

**MOVED BY: Brad Clark
SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson**

THAT the Memorandum 2025 Asset Disposition be received.

CARRIED

9. New Business

There was none.

10. In-Camera Items for Matters of Law, Personnel and Property

There weren't any in-camera items.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee will be held on

Thursday, June 25, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the HCA Main Administration Office – Woodend Auditorium, 838 Mineral Springs Road, Ancaster, Ontario.

12. Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned.



Report

Report To: Budget & Administration Committee

Approved for Circulation By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Reviewed & Prepared By: Scott Fleming, Director of Finance & Central Support Services

Meeting Date: June 25, 2026

Subject: 2025 Reserve Balances & 2025 Accumulated Surplus Allocation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Budget & Administration Committee recommend approval by the Board of Directors the allocation of the accumulated surplus balance at December 31, 2025 of \$913,803 as follows:

- \$800,000 to the General Land Acquisition reserve,
- and \$113,803 to the Watershed Management Services reserve.

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HCA Reserve Balances (in thousands)

For the Year-Ending December 31, 2025

Reserve	2025 Opening Balance	-	2025 Net Transactions	+	2025 Reallocations During Year	+	2025 Surplus to be Allocated	=	2025 Closing Balance	=	2026 Opening Balance
a. Construction Capital and Major Maintenance	\$ 2,267		\$ (368)		\$ -		\$ -		\$ 1,899		\$ 1,899
b. Watershed Management Services	\$ 451		(109)		-		114		456		\$ 456
c. Fifty Point Wetland	\$ 119		(33)		(86)		-		-		\$ -
d. Saltfleet CA Wetland Restoration Project	\$ 1,729		(458)		86		-		1,357		\$ 1,357
e. General Land Acquisition	\$ 1,218		(461)		-		800		1,557		\$ 1,557
f. Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	\$ 405		-		-		-		405		\$ 405
g. Westfield: Friend of Westfield & Endowment Fund	\$ 268		7		-		-		275		\$ 275
h. General Stabilization Reserve	\$ 3,000		-		-		-		3,000		\$ 3,000
i. Human Resources	\$ 463		(221)		-		-		242		\$ 242
j. Legal Issues	\$ 300		-		-		-		300		\$ 300
k. Unscheduled Capital	\$ 700		(100)		-		-		600		\$ 600
l. Climate Change Initiatives	\$ 180		77		-		-		257		\$ 257
m. Records Management & Information Technology (IT)	\$ 417		(157)		-		-		260		\$ 260
n. Bench Maintenance	\$ 4		-		-		-		4		\$ 4
	\$ 11,521		\$ (1,823)		\$ -		\$ 914		\$ 10,612		\$ 10,612

- a. Worked on various projects on carryforward list, down 16%
- b. Worked on various projects throughout 2025
- c. Reserve account closed and reallocated in 2025 as project complete
- d. Construction of the second wetland and design and archaeological work on the third wetland
- e. Payment processed for the purchase of land in 2025
- f. No change during year
- g. Accrued endowment interest
- h. No change during year
- i. Dealt with some HR issues
- j. Maintain for unexpected legal challenges
- k. Completed budgeted renovations to Woodend Office
- l. Various initiatives throughout 2025 completed, revenue for 10% of membership pass sales
- m. Used reserve for digitization initiatives, software and hardware expenditures for IT Modernization initiatives
- n. Maintain memorial benches

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Report to: Budget & Administration Committee

Approved for Circulation By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Reviewed By: T. Scott Peck, MCIP/RPP, Deputy CAO/Director, Watershed Management Services
 Scott Fleming, Director, Finance and Central Support Services
 Matt Hall, Director of Capital Projects & Strategic Services
 Gord Costie, Director of Conservation Area Services
 Marlene Ferreira, Director of Human Resources & Wellness

Prepared By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Meeting Date: June 25, 2026

Subject: 2027 Budget Process and Year 3 Strategic Plan Initiatives

Recommendation:

THAT the Budget & Administration Committee recommends to the Board of Directors;

THAT this report be received for information; and further,

THAT the Year 3 initiatives identified in the report that support all four priority areas in the 2025–2029 Strategic Plan be approved and incorporated into 2027 year budgeting.

Executive Summary:

The development of the 2027 budget will occur on an accelerated timeline due to the October 2026 municipal election and the anticipated conservation authority amalgamation in early 2027. To ensure municipal review requirements can be met and budgets approved before year-end, staff are proposing an adjusted budget schedule that advances Board consideration and approval timelines.

This report presents the proposed budget development framework and identifies the Year 3 initiatives under the 2025–2029 Strategic Plan for Board approval and integration into the 2027 budget process. A total of nine initiatives have been identified across the Strategic

Plan’s four priority areas: Water Resources Management, Organizational Excellence, Natural Heritage, and Connecting People to Nature. These initiatives reflect a combination of ongoing program delivery, strategic advancements, and foundational organizational work. Approval of the Year 3 initiatives at this time will allow departments to incorporate them into 2027 work plans and budget development. It will also provide strategic direction for what is expected to be the final budget developed under the current Hamilton Conservation Authority structure prior to the transition to the Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority in 2027.

Staff Comment / Discussion:

Budget Timeframe

Historically, the budget process has followed a phased approach, with strategic priorities identified in June, key revenue and expenditure assumptions confirmed in August, and a draft budget presented to the Budget & Administration Committee and Board in October. Following Board endorsement, participating municipalities were provided 30 days to review and comment before final budget approval in December.

Given the October 2026 municipal election, staff are proposing to advance the process and obtain final Board approval in October. This will require approval of the draft budget at the September Board meeting to allow circulation to participating municipalities and consideration of any feedback prior to final approval the following month.

Budget Assumptions

Given the pending regional amalgamation and municipal election, staff are recommending a maintenance budget approach that continues all existing programs and services.

Budget Component	2027 Planning Assumption
Service Levels	Maintain all current programs and services.
Municipal Operating Levy	Proposed operating levy increase of 3.7%, consistent with the 2026 approved budget.
Capital Funding	Continued annual capital block funding of \$2.0 million from the City of Hamilton.
Planning and Permitting Fees	No increase, consistent with provincial direction to freeze planning and permitting fees.
Conservation Area Fees	Review fee schedule and bring forward recommendations to support revenue generation where appropriate.
Budget Approach	Maintenance budget reflecting organizational transition and pending regional amalgamation.

Year 3 Strategic Plan Priorities

The 2025–2029 Strategic Plan identifies four key priority areas that guide organizational

direction. The Year 3 initiatives continue building momentum toward achieving the Strategic Plan outcomes, with targeted actions that reflect each area's focus. Several continue the work of Year 1 and 2 initiatives where program, service and system reviews were undertaken with resulting priority recommendations brought through the Budget & Administration Committee and Conservation Advisory Board noting multi-year implementation.

Water Resources Management



Focused on safeguarding the health of the watershed and protecting people and property from natural hazards.

1. **Implement priority system enhancements** to improve connectivity and reliability of streamflow, precipitation, and snowpack monitoring network, based on the recommendations from the 2025 system review and work completed in 2026.

2027 Budget Key Initiatives include:

- *Proposed 10 New Tipping Buckets, 3 New Rain Gauges and 1 additional snow survey –funded through operational/capital budgets or reserves and funding may also be required in subsequent years.*

Organizational Excellence



Focused on our organizational resources to ensure efficient and responsive operations are available to meet the needs of the future.

2. **Undertake transition activities and work stemming from the transition plan**

2027 Budget: staff time to be built into workplans; any other costs are yet to be determined including funding.

3. **Implement key initiatives from the Digital Transformation Plan** to provide operational efficiencies and advance information management practices.

2027 Budget: Key initiatives include:

- a) *Digitization of hard copy Planning & Regulator permit files, completing the migration of all related records into the CA Content Management System and optimizing use of this tool for efficient workflows and automated records management*
- b) *Undertaking a needs assessment centred on finance and HR business processes to inform planned evaluation of an ERP system*

- c) *Continuing development of Microsoft 365 sharepoint environment to modernize digital information management, collaboration and internal communications along with the development of a related training plan*

IT/Records reserve funds will be required to support continuation of contract staffing for records management initiatives. Software and training related initiatives will be undertaken with existing resources. Allocations for additional funding from a variety of sources will also be required in subsequent years.

Natural Heritage



Focused on the management and conservation of natural areas, which include the forests, wetlands, meadows, and watercourses within the watershed.

4. **Construction of the third wetland at Devil’s Punchbowl for the Saltfleet Wetland Restoration Program** and advancing design for the fourth and final wetland.

2027 Budget: Built into staff workplans; Heritage Green Community Trust grant support for the third wetland construction through the HCF. Reserve funding of \$250,000 to initiate the design of the fourth and final wetland.

5. **Continue priority monitoring and restoration actions** based on the 2025 comprehensive monitoring and restoration plan and work completed in 2026 to guide enhancements of natural areas.

2027 Budget Key Initiatives include restoration works, invasive species and removal/contracts as well as HWA treatments

6. **Continue to develop a framework to integrate existing data sets for monitoring, invasive species, and stewardship data systems** to support identification and visualization of priority restoration areas.

2027 Budget: Staff time built into workplans; grant and funding opportunities will be sought where appropriate;

Connecting People to Nature



Focused on the conservation of HCA lands and connecting communities to natural areas.

7. **Implement Access and Amenities Review recommendations for the 2025 review and work completed in 2026** to improve visitor accessibility and inclusivity across conservation areas continuing new accessible pathways with picnic table pads.

Built into workplans; Foundation support

8. **Implement visitor engagement recommendations from the 2025 Conservation Areas Program Review and building on work from 2026 to enrich visitor experiences.**

2027 Budget Key Initiatives:

- a) Expansion of the learn to series to include paint in the park
- b) Partner organization interpretive hikes
- c) Providing tackle share/loaner programs
- d) Disc golf tournament promotion

Built into workplans; Foundation support and summer student funding to be pursued.

9. **Support advancement of master/management planning work** for the Dundas Valley Study Area into Phase 2 under the current contract with Thinc Design Inc.

2027 Budget: Estimated \$150,000 from capital budget

Strategic Plan Linkage:

The initiative supports all aspects of the HCA Strategic Plan 2025 – 2029.

Agency Comments:

MECP has advised that it would issue direction to manage the 2027 budget process for the 36 predecessor CAs to provide clarity around process and timelines. It was noted that direction will require CAs complete budget by year end or earlier and levies be issued to the current participating municipalities. Additionally, MECP has provided municipal levy apportionment percentages which remain unchanged for HCA's two participating municipalities with City of Hamilton providing 99.24% and Township of Puslinch providing 0.76%.

Legal / Financial Implications:

The Year 3 initiatives include a mix of operational and capital requirements. In most cases, staff time will be incorporated into departmental workplans, and external funding from grants and the Hamilton Conservation Foundation will be pursued where appropriate, along with use of reserves where required.

Related Reports and Appendices:

Final HCA Strategic Plan Report approval June 2024

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Report to: Budget & Administration Committee

Approved for Circulation By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Reviewed By and Prepared By: Marlene Ferreira, Director, Human Resources and Wellness Services

Meeting Date: June 25, 2026

Subject: Legislative Minimum Wage Increase to HCA Casual Wage Rates

Recommendation:

THAT the Budget & Administration Committee recommends to the Board of Directors:

THAT the revised Casual/Seasonal wage grids for Hamilton Conservation Authority and Confederation Beach Park, Lakeland Pool and Wild Waterworks be approved, which provides for the following:

- a) **The provincially mandated minimum wage rate of \$17.95, effective October 1, 2026, be applied to Level 1, Step 1 positions; and**
- b) **An additional increase of seventeen cents to be applied to Level 1, Step 2 positions for the 2027 hiring year.**

Executive Summary:

The Ontario government has announced that minimum wage rates will increase on October 1, 2026, based on the Ontario Consumer Price Index. The general minimum wage will rise by \$0.35 to \$17.95 per hour. In accordance with provincial legislation, HCA must update the affected wage category accordingly.

To ensure compliance, staff recommend increasing Level 1, Step 1 of the Casual/Seasonal Wage Grids to align with the new minimum wage of \$17.95 per hour. In addition, it is recommended that Level 1, Step 2 be increased by seventeen cents, resulting in an hourly wage of \$18.22 per hour.

The adjustment to Step 2 is intended to maintain appropriate differentiation between entry-level and returning employees, support internal pay equity, and recognize the experience and operational value that returning seasonal staff bring to HCA. These employees often require less onboarding and training, allowing them to contribute more quickly and effectively.

Staff Comment / Discussion:

Casual and seasonal employees are important to HCA’s workforce. They provide operational support across parks, pools, and field operations during peak seasonal periods. The majority of these positions are active from May through September, and some continue into October depending on operational requirements.

HCA has a casual/seasonal wage grid for seasonal staff hired to assist our owned and managed operations. Annually, approximately 300 casual and seasonal staff are employed across the HCA as outlined below:

Area	Number of casual staff
HCA conservation areas	121
Confederation Beach Park non wave pool	21
Confederation Beach Park Wild Waterworks	153
Office / Field Operations	6

For casual staff hired in 2026, approximately 21% (64 positions) of these roles are compensated at Level 1, Step 1 of the Casual/Seasonal wage grids. With the incoming increase in the provincial minimum wage of \$17.95, the current Level 1, Step 1 rate of \$17.60 per hour will no longer meet legislative requirements.

To maintain the integrity of the wage structure and support ongoing recruitment and retention efforts, staff recommend the following adjustments:

- Level 1, Step 1: Increase to \$17.95/hour to meet provincial minimum wage requirements
- Level 1, Step 2: Increase from \$18.05/hour to \$18.22/hour to preserve progression within the wage grid.

These changes will:

- Ensure compliance with provincial wage legislation
- Preserve our competitiveness relative to other local employers
- Support recruitment and retention efforts for essential seasonal positions
- Promote internal equity between new and returning staff
- Recognize the operational benefits and experience of returning employees
- Reduce onboarding and training pressures by encouraging employee return rates from season to season

Strategic Plan Linkage:

The initiative refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2025 – 2029:

- **Strategic Priority Area** – Promote employee training, engagement, well-being, diversity, and inclusivity to strengthen our organizational resilience and ensure employees are equipped with the necessary skills to address emerging needs.

Agency Comments:

None

Legal / Financial Implications:

The estimated financial impact of the proposed wage grid changes, including the 35 cents differential increase to comply with minimum wage for Level 1, Step 1 and the seventeen cents increase for Level 1, Step 2, is projected to increase casual staffing expenses by approximately \$22,350 in 2027.

As Confederation Beach Park and Wild Waterworks is owned by the City of Hamilton, staffing costs for are budgeted separately by the City and are not included in HCA's budget.

Staff will advise of the 2027 impact at its next City of Hamilton PMRT meeting.

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