



MINUTES

In-person meeting at Deerhurst Resort
and online via Zoom
March 18, 2025, 2:00 p.m.



Present: Jeff Suddaby, Scott Morrison, Andrew Buwalda, Steve Carr, Chandler Joliffe, Linda Fraser
Regrets: Chirag Patel
Staff: Kelly Haywood, Dawn Huddlestone, Torin Suddaby
Guests: In person: Halley Clover, Chamber; Rachel Hunt, BIA
Via Zoom: Lauren MacDermid, Town of Huntsville

1. Welcome and agenda approval

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m.

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented.

Moved by: Scott Morrison

Seconded by: Chandler Joliffe

CARRIED

2. **Declaration of conflict of interest** – Andrew Buwalda and Linda Fraser declared a conflict for specific motions within item 5. Grant awards and partnership funding. They will abstain from voting where necessary.

3. Approval of meeting minutes

Motion: To accept the minutes from the February 18, 2025, meeting as presented.

Moved by: Chandler Joliffe

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

4. Financial update

4.1. YTD and cash flow report – Andrew Buwalda, treasurer, provided an overview of HMATA’s cash flow and forecast for the remainder of the fiscal year. HMATA is in a good financial position with just under \$1.6M in cash-related assets. Forecasting total net revenues by end of fiscal year (May 31) of \$966,000 (net of 10% reserve, or just over \$1M gross revenue). Projecting surplus of \$142,000 by year-end.

4.2. 2025/26 draft budget update – Kelly Haywood, executive director, presented details of the draft 2025/26 budget for consideration, to be discussed in further detail at the next meeting.

5. Grant awards and partnership funding

Motion: To provide Huntsville Festival of the Arts partnership funding for their 2025/26 season in the amount of \$40,000 to offset Deerhurst artist fees (\$35,000) and Algonquin Theatre artist fees (\$5,000), as well as provide in-kind marketing support.

Moved by: Scott Morrison

Seconded by: Steve Carr

CARRIED



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Motion: To provide Huntsville Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce partnership funding in the amount of \$50,500 for the 2025 Maple Festival (\$11,500 plus in-kind marketing support), 2025 Muskoka 2/4 Craft Beer Festival (\$5,000), River Mill Park skating rink installation and operations (\$24,000), and administrative services (\$10,000).

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Scott Morrison

Discussion occurred regarding the cost of administrative services, specifically answering calls and replying to emails for the Explore Huntsville inquiry line and general inbox, as HMATA does not have staff in place for these tasks and the Chamber is already contracted by the Town to provide in-person tourism information services.

Motion to amend: To reduce the funding for the administrative services provided by the Huntsville Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce to \$5,000, and amend the original motion to read: To provide Huntsville Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce partnership funding in the amount of \$45,500 for the 2025 Maple Festival (\$11,500 plus in-kind marketing support), 2025 Muskoka 2/4 Craft Beer Festival (\$5,000), River Mill Park skating rink installation and operations (\$24,000), and administrative services (\$5,000).

Moved by: Jeff Suddaby

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

Motion: To adopt the motion as amended.

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Scott Morrison

CARRIED

Motion: To provide the Downtown Huntsville BIA partnership funding in the amount of \$40,000 for the 2025 Harvest Festival (\$7,000), Girlfriends' Getaway Weekend (\$8,000), and Huntsville's Hallmark Holiday (\$25,000).

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Scott Morrison

CARRIED

Motion: To provide the Muskoka Tourism Marketing Association funding in the amount of \$60,000, to be allocated from the marketing budget.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs.

Andrew Buwalda abstained from voting.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Linda Fraser



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Motion: *To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to the YMCA.*

Moved by: Scott Morrison

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

Discussion occurred regarding the value of the job fair for local accommodators and tourism operators, and the importance of informing local job seekers about the job fair. Recommend providing the YMCA with \$1,000 from the 2024/25 budget and \$1,000 from the 2025/26 budget in principle pending confirmation of a job fair in 2026, to be used for local marketing of the job fair in each year.

Motion: *To amend the original motion to read: To award a visitor attraction grant to YMCA Employment Services in the amount of \$1,000 for the 2025 job fair, and an additional \$1,000 in 2026 contingent on a job fair occurring in the spring of that year.*

Motion: *To adopt the motion as amended.*

Motion: *To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to Grippid and Ripped Disc Sports.*

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Steve Carr

CARRIED

Motion: *To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to award a visitor attraction grant to the Huntsville Mountain Bike Association in the amount of \$11,300 for trail development in 2025.*

Moved by: Scott Morrison

Seconded by: Linda Fraser

CARRIED

Motion: *To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to award a visitor attraction grant to the Golf Association of Ontario in the amount of \$5,000 for the 2025 Ontario Men's Amateur Championship.*

Andrew Buwalda abstained from voting.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Linda Fraser

CARRIED

Motion: *To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to the Limberlost Challenge.*

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Scott Morrison

CARRIED



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Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to award a visitor attraction grant to Trisport Events in the amount of \$20,000 for the 2025 Ironman 70.3 Muskoka.

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Linda Fraser

CARRIED

Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to the Huntsville Theatre Company.

Moved by: Linda Fraser

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

Motion: To accept the Board of Directors' recommendation to provide the Rotary Club of Huntsville with one-time capital funding in the amount of \$30,000 toward replacement of motors and refurbishment of bathtubs for the annual Dockfest.

Moved by: Scott Morrison

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to award a visitor attraction grant to Muskoka Pride in the amount of \$4,000 for 2025 Muskoka Pride Week events.

Moved by: Scott Morrison

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to award a visitor attraction grant to the MG Car Club of Toronto in the amount of \$500 for the MG102Fest.

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Linda Fraser

CARRIED

Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to award a visitor attraction grant to Sandhill Nursery in the amount of \$20,000 for the 2025 Sandhill Fall Fair.

Moved by: Scott Morrison

Seconded by: Steve Carr

CARRIED

Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to award a visitor attraction grant to Gloche Publishing in the amount of \$2,500 for the 2025 Forest of Modern Art.

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Linda Fraser



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Motion: *To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to Sugarbush Hill Maple Farm.*

Moved by: Scott Morrison

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

Motion: *To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to award a visitor attraction grant to Indigenous Fashion Arts/FREED in the amount of \$10,000 for the inaugural Indigenous Arts Market in October 2025.*

Andrew Buwalda abstained from voting.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Linda Fraser

CARRIED

Motion: *To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to award a visitor attraction grant to the Muskoka Avalanche in the amount of \$5,000 to launch a 55+ women's hockey team and tournaments.*

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

Motion: *To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to award a visitor attraction grant to Canvas Brewing Co. in the amount of \$2,000 for the 2026 Tap Takeover Beerfest.*

Linda Fraser abstained from voting.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Scott Morrison

CARRIED

Motion: *To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to 3 Pines Lodge.*

Moved by: Scott Morrison

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED



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Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to Back of Beyond Equine Centre.

Moved by: Linda Fraser

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to HM Day Spa.

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Steve Carr

CARRIED

Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to Muskoka Supper Club.

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Linda Fraser

CARRIED

Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to Peach Club.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

Motion: To accept the grant review committee's recommendation to not award a visitor attraction grant to Port Sydney/Utterson & Area Chamber of Commerce.

Moved by: Linda Fraser

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

6. ED report

6.1. Marketing report review – March

Staff presented details of marketing initiatives in February. Bird watching campaign is underway and getting good traction. Foraging pilot campaign will happen this spring.

6.2. Market research RFP update

Five proposals received. Staff are reviewing and will make an award on March 20. Board will be engaged for input on survey questions.

6.3. Arrowhead Nordic funding

Motion: To rescind the motion approved on October 15, 2024, "To provide Arrowhead Nordic

Ski Club with a \$12,000 community tourism sponsorship for the 2025 Ontario Youth Championships.”

Moved by: Linda Fraser

Seconded by: Scott Morrison

CARRIED

6.4. Meetings and conventions update

Kelly attended Destination Direct meeting planner event in Ottawa. Received good feedback from planners.

6.5. Eclipse update

Contract negotiations continue. There is some concern about attendance in years 2 and 3 (unknowns about how many people will go), and there’s been discussion about increasing the ticket rate to \$15 (currently the Board has it capped at \$10).

Discussion: Would be reasonable to include in agreement that they can set the price subject to approval by the HMATA Board.

6.6. River Mill Park light installation update

Will be installed in the fall given that rink will be removed for the season soon.

6.7. Spring campaign

Staff propose that \$7,000 of \$12,000 from rescinded Arrowhead Nordic motion will be used for a Huntsville-specific spring marketing campaign featuring a maple trail passport. Visitors will get passport from their hotel and will get a free item from 8 different café locations when they get it stamped. Passport will also promote other activities like bird watching. Will run Apr. 15 to mid-June. Limited run of 300, while supplies last. If successful, will re-run in 2026.

Additional discussion: Remaining \$5,000 will be used to replace sod in River Mill Park at rink location. Staff have talked with Town staff about flattening the terrain in the park — this is a large endeavour due to laterals that may be an issue. RMP is underutilized, with no activation in the summer, and it’s on the only real waterfront downtown. Are pop-up vendors a possibility? If park needs to be redone, there’s much more that could be done in that space. Food carts are not allowed on municipal property.

7. Closed session

Motion: To enter closed session at 3:44 p.m.

Moved by: Scott Morrison

Seconded by: Chandler Joliffe

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General discussion occurred. It was noted that the employment contract for the Executive Director is coming up for renewal on May 31, 2025. A subcommittee was formed, consisting of Jeff, Andrew, and Scott, to review the contract and report back to the Board at the April regular meeting.

Motion: To exit closed session at 4:05 p.m.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Scott Morrison

CARRIED

8. Business arising from closed session

None

9. Next meetings and adjournment

9.1. Next meetings:

Wednesday, March 25, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., Canvas Brewing Co – AGM

Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., Deerhurst Resort (G8 Boardroom)

Tuesday, May 20, 2025, 2:00 p.m., Deerhurst Resort (A.Y. Jackson Room)

Tuesday, June 17, 2025, 2:00 p.m., Deerhurst Resort (Waterhouse Ballroom)

9.2. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Scott Morrison

CARRIED

IMPORTANT 2025 DATES

- **January:** Annual business & marketing planning commences
- **February 18:** Initial budget discussions
- **March 25 2pm:** AGM, Canvas Brewing Co. event space
- **April 22:** ED presentation of 2025/26 marketing plan
- **April 22:** HMATA budget approval
- **April 30 9am:** General Committee presentation, Town Hall Council Chambers
- **May:** Town/HMATA biannual touchpoint (launch TPA preliminary discussion)
- **May 31:** Year-end
- **June:** TPA draft
- **July:** Begin strategic planning
- **September:** Final draft TPA to Town staff for General Committee
- **December:** Final TPA due
- **December:** Strategic plan expires