

Agricultural Advisory Board Minutes
The Corporation of Norfolk County

July 9, 2025
10:00 a.m.

Norfolk County Administration Building
50 Colborne St. S., Simcoe ON
Meeting Room B - Upstairs

Members Present: M. Bollert, J. Schooley, C. Hewitson, Councillor M. Columbus,
S. McGowan

Members Absent: R. Blake

Staff Present: L. Castles, Committee Coordinator, J. Regan, Director of
Economic Development, S. Gardner, Senior Economic
Development Officer, L. Kalliokoski, Economic Development
Coordinator, A. Arbuckle, Economic Development Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Chair Jen Schooley called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Resolution No. 20

Moved By: S. McGowan

Seconded By: C. Hewitson

That the agenda be approved as presented.

Carried.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

4.1 Norfolk Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes - May 14, 2025

Resolution No. 21

Moved By: C. Hewitson

Seconded By: Councillor M. Columbus

That the minutes of the Norfolk Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on May 14, 2025, be approved as presented.

Carried.

5. Presentations

There were no presentations.

6. Deputations

There were no deputations.

7. Matters to be Considered

7.1 Rural Economic Development Grant (ROD)

John Regan, Director of Economic Development and Susan Gardner, Senior Economic Development Officer introduced this matter and responded to questions.

The committee noted the following:

- The grant is not new it has just had a name change from RED to ROD Rural Ontario Development
- This year more money is being granted and the county intent on apply again this year.
- This grant is now eligible to rural small businesses with 10-20 employees

Resolution No. 22

Moved By: C. Hewitson

Seconded By: S. McGowan

That the Rural Economic Development Grant (ROD) be received as information.

Carried.

7.2 Regional Partnership Opportunities

John Regan, Director of Economic Development and Sue Gardner Senior Economic Development Officer introduced this matter and responded to questions.

The committee noted the following:

- Norfolk County is currently an active member of SCOR
- Looking into the opportunities SOMA could provide Norfolk County
 - o Like the international market overseas
- Talks with Haldimand, Brant and First Nations into starting a regional partnership to benefit the region and not individual municipalities.
- Interested in bringing industrial agriculture to the area.

Resolution No. 23

Moved By: Councillor M. Columbus

Seconded By: S. McGowan

That the Regional Partnership Opportunities be received as information.

Carried.

Resolution No. 24

Moved By: M. Bollert

Seconded By: C. Hewitson

That the Norfolk Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the budget request to join SOMA; and

Further that the Norfolk Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the proposed idea to hire an additional Economic Development Staff member to create a concierge system.

Carried.

7.3 AG Tour - Update

Lindsay Kalliokoski, Economic Development Coordinator, provided the update.

The committee noted the following:

- Everything for the tour has been scheduled
- Believe there will be a good representation of the county

Resolution No. 25

Moved By: C. Hewitson

Seconded By: S. McGowan

That the AG Tour- Update be received as information.

Carried.

7.4 TICP Grant Opportunities

John Regan, Director of Economic Development and Amy Arbuckle, Economic Development Coordinator, presented and responded to questions.

Resolution No. 26

Moved By: C. Hewitson

Seconded By: Shawn McGowan

That the TICP Grant Opportunities be received as information.

Carried.

8. Communications

There were no communication items.

9. Other Business

9.1 TFW Program Information Session

Shawn McGowan spoke to this matter.

The committee noted the following:

- Looking at the possibility of developing a job fair/ employer information session for employers in agriculture
- Have representation from local schools like Fanshawe and Guelph University
- Share real information about what working in agriculture is, what it means to work on a farm, and address why Canadians don't want to work in agriculture.

9.2 Housing Standards

Chair Jen Schooley spoke to this matter.

The committee noted the following:

- The current regulations surrounding bunk house standards
- The possibility use of bunk houses in the off season and how it could benefit not only the farms but the local economy.

Resolution No. 27

Moved By: M. Bollert

Seconded By: C. Hewitson

That the Norfolk Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the idea of a zoning amendment to allow bunkhouses to be used for other purposes during shoulder and off seasons.

Carried.

9.3 Globe and Mail

Shawn McGowan spoke to this matter.

The committee noted the following:

- A writer from the Globe and Mail has reached out to Shawn about writing an article about immigration, farm dependence and the full story of working in agriculture.
- If all goes according to plan the article should be published in October in their business magazine.
- The committee is worried about how Norfolk County could be portrayed in the article and wants all farms to be cautious before speaking to the reporter.

10. Next Meeting

The next Norfolk Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for September 3rd, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

11. Adjournment

Resolution No. 28

Moved By: Councillor M. Columbus

Seconded By: S. McGowan

That the meeting be adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Carried.