

**Meeting Minutes**  
***BIA Board Meeting***



**Date: November 10, 2025**

**Time: 8:30am-10am**

**Location: City Hall | 52 Frank Street**

Currently Meet the Governance Policy with 2 Representatives from the Municipal Council & 7 Directors At-Large

**Attendees:** Mark Holmes, Dan Kiekens, Cathy Pacheco, Kaity Phillips, Colin Grantham, Heather Lalonde, Julianne Kloss, Donna Pammer

**Regrets:** Adam Rice, Courtney Sinclair, Frank Kennes, Chris Trakzuk

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### **1. Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 8:36am

### **2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

- Approval for October 2025 Meeting Minutes. Motion from Mark, seconded by Cathy. All in favour.

### **3. Financial Report (Mark)**

- Standard expenses paid in October, including:
  - Consulting
  - Streetscaping expenses (Christmas flowers)
  - Annual meeting costs
  - Advertising & promotion (Downtown gift box project expenses coded here)
- Treasurer expects the BIA to finish the year **approximately \$10,000 in deficit**, to be covered from the **reserve fund**.
- Current reserve is approximately **\$60,000+**, which is somewhat more than originally targeted but now **less than one full year** of current operating costs (budget now > \$100,000).

### **Discussion – Reserve Fund:**

- No explicit requirement in BIA by-laws or provincial legislation for a specific reserve amount.
- OBIAA notes many BIAs hold more than they strictly “need.”
- General NFP best practice is ~one year of operating in reserve, but BIAs have **guaranteed levy revenue**, unlike donor-funded organizations.
- Concern raised about public optics when asking for levy increases while sitting on a sizable reserve.
- Consensus that reserve will likely be needed:

- To **smooth levy increases** in the short term.
- To support businesses during the upcoming **“big dig”** (downtown reconstruction).
- To contribute to **capital enhancements** (e.g., electrical outlets, speakers, lighting) to be installed while streets are already dug up.

**Action:**

- Treasurer to continue planning on using **reserve funds to offset** part of next year’s levy increase.
- BIA to prepare a **“wish list”** for big-dig-related improvements (power, speakers, outlets, etc.) for use in municipal consultation. Subcommittee for Big Dig.

**Motion:** That the **financial report** for the period ending October 31, 2025 be approved. Moved by Colin, seconded by Kaity. **Carried.**

**4. Events and Marketing**

- Hometown Christmas
  - Kait (municipality) has pre-booked the horse & carriage.
  - Cost is approx. **\$1,000** (similar to last year).
  - Sponsorships will be sought; however, the municipality has asked if the BIA can again **sponsor the ride** if sponsorship is not secured.
  - Route this year will be **up and down Front Street only:**
    - Planned pick-up/drop-off at **Shops on Sydenham** and the **corner of Front & Thomas**.
    - This avoids congestion on Frank Street experienced last year.

**Motion:** That the BIA fund the horse & carriage ride for Hometown Christmas if sponsorship is not secured. Moved by Colin, seconded by Dan. **Carried.**

- Downtown Strathroy Gift Boxes Project
  - Launching a pilot of **50 Downtown Strathroy gift boxes** for the holiday season.
  - Tentative box size **~15" x 15" x 6"** (sized to accommodate jars and items).
  - BIA purchases items at **wholesale**; retail price of box will reflect total value plus packaging costs.
  - Draft estimate: retail value around **\$70–75** (to be finalized).
  - Focus is on **tangible items** rather than coupons, though some light coupon/offer content may be added if it adds value.

**5. Business Advocacy**

- Local First AI Workshop
  - **Local First / AI Workshop** is scheduled for **November 19** from **9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.** at the **library**.
  - Facilitator: **Sam from Mind Model AI** (Waterloo), recommended by other Chambers/BIAAs.
  - Only **~3 spots** remained at time of meeting.
  - Encouragement for municipal staff (e.g., finance, economic development) and local businesses to attend.
- OBIAA & TIAO Memberships
  - OBIAA membership renewal:
    - Approx. **\$265/year**, now scaled by BIA levy level.

- Board agreed that OBIAA has provided significant value in the past year (training, resources, peer support).
- Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (**TIAO**) membership:
  - Discounted rate of **\$250/year** with OBIAA membership.
  - Provides tourism-focused training, advocacy, and information beneficial to BIAs working on destination development.

**Motion:** That the BIA purchase/renew **TIAO membership** at the discounted rate of **\$250 for one year**. Moved by Colin, seconded by Dan. **Carried.**

## 6. Budget, Levy & Reserve Discussion

- Proposed levy increase from approximately \$63,000 to \$98,500, with the rate moving from 0.15% to 0.242% of commercial assessment. Purpose of increase:
  - Fund a full-time BIA Executive Director role.
  - Align Strathroy BIA more closely with peer BIAs, as current levy is below median/average.
- Data presented (high-level):
  - 72% of levy payers would see an increase of \$0–10 per month.
  - A small number of high-assessment properties would see larger increases (\$100–400 per month).
- Discussion around:
  - Fairness to higher-paying properties vs. many small ones paying very little.
  - Concept of a minimum levy (e.g., \$200–\$300) to avoid very low contributions for some members.
  - Impact of MPAC reassessment in future years and political optics at Council.

## 9. Membership & Directory Updates

- **Open/Coming:**
  - Bookkeeping firm **Pointwise** leaving at month-end.
  - **Hot Off the Press** opening (ribbon cutting same day as Santa Claus Parade).
  - KYIS Embroidery business expanding

## 10. Municipal Update

- **Municipal budget:**
  - BIA levy/budget will be presented as part of municipal budget in January (target Jan 13).
  - New provincial rules require budget approval within 30 days of presentation.
  - Strongly recommended that the BIA attend the Council budget meeting to present the levy increase rationale.

## 13. Next Meeting Dates and Adjournment

- Next Meeting Monday, December 8th at 8:30am.
- Motion to adjourn by Cathy, seconded by Kaity. All in favour. Meeting adjourned at 9:38am.

