

Meeting Minutes
BIA Annual General Meeting



Date: October 2, 2025

Time: 7:30-9:30PM

Location: Rusty Wrench Brewing Co. | 9 Front St W

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

Attendees: Adam Rice, Daniel Kiekens, Mark Holmes, Kaity Phillips, Chris Trakzuk, Cathy Pacheco, Frank Kennes, Julianne Kloss, Kait Topham, Rick Robinson, Nicole Miller, Matt Baganha, Hassan Hamze, Kate Hamze, Sue Looman, Heather Lalonde, Kim Oliver, Shayna Naus, Jenny Gerhold, Sandy Meyer

Regrets: Colin Grantham, Courtney Sinclair

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **7:43PM** by **Chair Adam Rice**. The Chair welcomed members, board representatives, and guests, acknowledging municipal partners, staff, and community collaborators.

Attendance was noted, and quorum was confirmed.

2. Approval of Previous AGM Minutes

- As the 2024 AGM minutes were not available at the time of the meeting, they will be distributed by email for review following the AGM.

Motion: To approve the 2024 AGM minutes once circulated.

Moved by: Nicole, **Seconded by:** Dan, **Carried.**

3. Ratify and Affirm Board Actions for 2024

- The Chair explained that this is a formal motion to confirm all actions taken by the BIA Board of Management during the 2024 operating year.

Motion: To ratify and affirm all actions taken by the Board of Management in 2024.

Moved by: Dan, **Seconded by:** Kaity, **Carried.**

4. Year in Review – 2024/2025 Highlights

- The Chair provided an overview of the year's major initiatives and successes:
 - **Events:** *Girls' Night Out – Bubbles & Blooms, Canvas & Culture Night Market*, and community collaborations.
 - **Campaigns:** *Local First* partnership with the Chamber and Municipality, including website launch and Mayor's Breakfast.

- **Beautification:** New murals, and submission to *Mural Routes* network.
- **Advocacy & Collaboration:** Stronger ties with the Municipality, Chamber, and OBIAA; attendance at the 2024 OBIAA Conference.
- Challenges noted:
 - Operating with a lean \$60K budget.
 - Rising costs without levy adjustments for inflation.
 - Limited staff capacity (part-time role, no office).
 - External pressures such as the “Big Dig,” tariffs, and economic uncertainty.

5. 2026 Budget Presentation & Levy Discussion

- The Chair presented the **proposed 2026 budget** and rationale for a levy increase from \$61,675 to \$98,500. Discussion focused on:
 - Aligning Strathroy’s levy with other BIAs of similar size (currently among the lowest in Ontario).
 - Reinvesting funds into marketing, events, and beautification to increase downtown visibility and vibrancy.
 - Addressing the staffing gap. Strathroy operates with less than 60% of the average staffing capacity of peer BIAs.
 - Building reserves for potential tax clawbacks, vacancies, and future infrastructure projects.
- Concerns Raised:
 - Some members expressed caution regarding the size of the proposed increase and requested further clarification on how individual property levies would be impacted. It was noted that for the majority of members (59%) the cost would be less than \$10 per month.
 - One member expressed concern that levy amounts are tied directly to property assessment values, meaning property owners who have recently renovated or improved their buildings could see disproportionate increases.
 - Discussion included the possibility of restructuring the levy model to introduce a minimum contribution to ensure fairness across all members and to consider implementing a maximum cap to prevent disproportionate increases for high-assessment properties.
 - Members recognized that the BIA has **never implemented a significant levy increase since its inception**, leaving Strathroy’s levy well below comparable BIAs and limiting the organization’s capacity for programs and staff support.

Motion: To review levy funding options, including the potential for a minimum contribution from all members, and to increase the 2026 budget to support hiring a full-time Executive Director.

Moved by: Chris, **Seconded by:** Kim, **Carried.**

6. Financial Statements – 2025 Year-End

- The 2025 financial statements were presented, summarizing revenues, expenditures, and current balances.

Motion: To approve the 2024 financial statements as presented.

Moved by: Sue, **Seconded by:** Dan, **Carried.**

7. Member Survey Results

- The Chair summarized findings from the 2025 Member Survey (9 responses):

- Highest-rated programs: Beautification (7.2/10), BIA Social Media (7.0/10), CTV Commercials (6.8/10).
- Events (Markets and Night Markets) rated lower (5.0–5.4/10).
- Most respondents preferred daytime or flexible event schedules.
- Members expressed interest in family-friendly, cultural, and interactive programming.
- Members were reminded that **each business receives a free event booth**, and participation is key to visibility and success.

8. Looking Ahead – 2026 Priorities

- Plans for 2026 include:
 - Hiring a **full-time Executive Director** and establishing a downtown office.
 - Expanding **beautification** projects and seasonal décor.
 - Continuing **Local First** marketing and launching *Shop Small Saturday*, *Entrepreneurs’ Night*, and *Strathroy Gift Boxes*.
 - Strengthening **advocacy** and communications with Council during the Big Dig.

9. Recognition & Thanks

- Acknowledgements were given to:
 - **Board Members** (2025–2027 term) and retiring members.
 - **Staff and Municipal Staff:** Julianne Kloss (Coordinator), Heather Loedige (Economic Development), and Kaitlynd Topham (Events & Booking Coordinator).
 - **Community Partners:** The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, Chamber of Commerce, The Wright Place, OBIAA, and local sponsors.

10. Motion to Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved by: Chris, **Seconded by:** Dan, **Carried.**

The meeting adjourned at **9:23PM**.