

The Waterfront District BIA

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEETING

Monday, September 14, 2026

INVITED:

Jim Comuzzi, Chair
Jordan Calonego, Vice Chair
Robyn Despina, Treasurer
Peter White, Past Chair
Connor Remus, Director
Sarah Boyechko, Director
Frank Marino, Director
Nikos Mantis, Director
John Murray, Director
Andrew Foulds, Councillor
Kara Pratt, Recording Secretary

TENTATIVE:

REGRETS:

GUEST(S):

LOCATION/TIME: Goods & Co – Catered Snacks from off-site at 5:30 pm, in person.

Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2781002430?pwd=K2RPSnFqWVdKNityRIB2bTlIdnpWZz09&omn=84651952044>

Meeting ID: 278 100 2430

Passcode: WDBIA

Item	Description	Action
1.0	Meeting Call to Order and Disclosures of Interest Called to order - Disclosures of Interest:	
2.0	Approval of Agenda Recommendation: That the Board approve the Agenda as presented. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by:	

Item	Description	Action
3.0	Presentations 1. Matt Pearson – Growth Department, City of Thunder Bay, how Cities and BIAs work together 2. Brian Newman – Engineering, City of Thunder Bay, Re: Construction Norm Nadin – Owner of Nadin Construction Terry Deighton – Supervisor on Site for Nadin Construction (tentative)	
4.0	Approval of Minutes – August 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes Recommendation: That the August 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes be approved as circulated. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by:	
5.0	Business Arising from Past Minutes 1. Letter Re: Paramount Parking Lot – Update: Letter sent to Dilico regarding the Paramount Parking Lot 2. Electrical Box Wrap - Update: Meeting with the Public Art Committee on September 23 to discuss the BIA sponsoring the wraps with art provided by the BIA. Vik Wilen has done a wrap for the Mall St. Electrical Box (payment required) and Fisher Monahan for the electrical box behind the Ruttan Building/ the Loop. Awaiting an update from the Meeting as well as reconciliation from Harbourfest.	
6.0	Reports	
6.1	Chair's Report – 1. Executive Committee Update: The Executive Committee met about the budget – to be discussed further in the Treasurer's Report. 2. Strategic Plan Priorities Update: At the time of writing this agenda, 13 members have completed the Strategic Survey. Of the 13 responses only 12 are complete, one is blank.	

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	3. Sponsorship Requests – Executive Approvals Update: The Executive approved three Sponsorship Requests following the August Board meeting. Two requests were received after the August agenda deadline, and one request from Good Harvest was inadvertently missed when preparing the August agenda. • Waterfront District BIA Students – Harbourfest: \$50 in BIA Bucks was approved as a thank-you to Boreal Veterinary Clinic for judging the Harbourfest Dog Contest. • NV Night Club – Steve Aoki Concert: \$250 was approved for LED Board advertising in support of the Steve Aoki concert at NV Night Club. The original request was for \$1,000 in BIA Bucks. • Good Harvest – Pie Eating Contest: \$250 in BIA Bucks was approved for contest prizes and \$250 for LED Board advertising. Good Harvest also requested radio advertising through the BIA’s advertising arrangement with Acadia Broadcasting. The BIA will also assist with the required road closure and troubleshooting during event planning. Motion: THAT the Board of Directors receive the Sponsorship Requests update and ratify the Executive’s approval of the following support: \$50 in BIA Bucks for Harbourfest Support; \$250 in LED Board advertising for NV Night Club’s Steve Aoki concert; and \$250 in BIA Bucks and \$250 in LED Board advertising for Good Harvest. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by:	
6.2	ED Report – 1. Canada Summer Jobs Program Update: Summer staff have completed their summer with the Waterfront District BIA. Two staff have returned to full-time university: the Grant Coordinator and the Mural Coordinator. The Events and Activities Coordinator returns to her very part-time role as the Intern should full-time university allow, and the Content Creator is working part-time as budget allows. Will work with the BIA Bookkeeper to complete the online reimbursement process. 2. Task Force Growth Update: The next meeting is October 22, 2026. The ED will continue to bring the BIA perspective forward on district growth, activation and support for local businesses and events. 3. Strategic Planning	

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	Update: The ED continues to recommend that the Board consider engaging an external facilitator to lead a one-and-a-half-day workshop focused on district revitalization, activation strategies and implementation priorities, to highlight the importance of these areas to the revitalization of a district and the function of a BIA. 4. Neighbourhood Navigator Program (CoTB) Update: The City of Thunder Bay is moving forward with hiring for the Neighbourhood Navigator positions for the fall or early winter. The ED has connected with City Administration for an updated timeline. 5. Harbourfest 2026 Update: Harbourfest was successfully completed on August 27. The event was well received; however, a significant amount of ED time was spent working through stage approval and certification requirements. The stage was ultimately confirmed not to require the certification originally requested. This is a learning and improvement opportunity for the City and event organizers. The ED will continue working with the appropriate City departments to identify ways to improve processes and support smaller local events, consistent with A29 of the Smart Growth Action Plan. 6. 2027 Budget Update: The City of Thunder Bay has requested preliminary 2027 budgets by September 25, 2026. Presentations to the City's Executive Leadership Team are expected between October 19 and November 6, with final approval anticipated in January 2027. A draft Waterfront District BIA budget is being presented to the Board at this meeting by the Treasurer. The ED will present the BIA's priorities to the City's Executive Leadership Team on October 29. 7. Marketing & Data Collection Initiative Update: Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) will be providing market data for the Waterfront District BIA, Firedog Communications and the CEDC for market strategy planning. The Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC) Neighbourhood Marketing and Promotion Initiative will market and promote the Waterfront District BIA. Deliverables include marketing strategy, photography, promotional templates, advertising and promotion. The offer was made to all BIAs and BAs. The Waterfront District BIA took the opportunity to partner with the CUI data initiative through OBIAA. Administrative Progress Update Completed	

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	○ Strategic Plan redistributed to the Board. ○ OBIAA Board Election Toolkit redistributed. ○ Summer staff onboarding and project assignments completed. ○ Harbourfest successfully completed. ○ Summer staff contracts completed. In Progress ○ Member priorities survey. ○ Fall Board Election preparation, including voter eligibility lists, AGM planning, Board applications and election materials. ○ Member Town Hall planning. ○ City advocacy related to parking, construction, access and district growth. ○ Cigarette butt receptacle project and related security solutions. ○ Tracking groundskeeper maintenance hours and district repairs. ○ 2027 planter, hanging basket and watering quotes. ○ September Member Open House. ○ Canada Summer Jobs reimbursement paperwork. Upcoming ○ 2027 budget preparation and presentation to City Administration. ○ Preliminary holiday campaign planning, possibility of including Christmas Passport to Win. ○ Trick-or-Treat Downtown. ○ 2027 flower RFP preparation. ○ Funding applications and approvals for 2027 initiatives. Executive Director's Summary Update: The next four months will focus heavily on the Board election and AGM, member engagement, 2027 budget and planning, City advocacy and preparation for the holiday season. Regular operations and member support will continue alongside these priorities. The ED will continue working with the Board and City departments to keep projects moving forward and identify practical improvements that support the Waterfront District and its businesses. Recommendation: That the Executive Director's Report be received for information. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by:	
6.3	Finance Committee – Robyn 1. 2027 Budget	

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	Update: The proposed 2027 budget reflects a 3% overall increase from 2026, as directed by the City of Thunder Bay. Total projected revenue is \$247,908.74, generated through a 50/50 split between BIA taxes levied and matching City contributions. Total expenses are currently budgeted at \$246,617.00, leaving a remaining \$141.74 unallocated balance for minimal overages and to ensure the budget fully meets the 3% increase target. Key changes include: • Payroll & Staffing: \$113,597, including a proposed 1% increase to the Executive Director's salary to \$77,000 and an 8% increase to maintenance wages to allow for a potential \$0.25/hour increase, subject to Board approval. • Student Wages: Reduced by 42% to \$5,550. This ensures mandatory employment-related costs of \$14,817 for CPP, EI and WSIB are covered for all employees. Part-time staffing outside of funded positions will not be budgeted for 2027. • Accounting & Legal: Increased to \$5,540 to reflect actual 2025 audit costs, which are now fully paid by the BIA. • Bookkeeping: Increased by 3% to \$11,330, negotiated down from a proposed 5% increase. An RFP for bookkeeping services may be considered to evaluate the current service and cost against the BIA's needs and revenue. • Member Support, Safety/Security, Beautification and Marketing: Funding remains in place to support member services, safety initiatives, seasonal beautification, advertising, promotion and BIA Bucks. Recommendation: That the Board approve the proposed 2027 budget as presented, including the current bookkeeping allocation, with the option to explore an RFP for bookkeeping services during 2027. Motion: THAT the Waterfront District BIA Board approve the proposed 2027 Budget as presented, reflecting a 3% overall increase from the 2026 budget; and that the Board authorize the Executive Director to explore an RFP for bookkeeping services, with any recommendation for a change in service brought back to the Board for approval. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by: 2. Treasurer's Report – for The Waterfront District BIA, For the Period Ending July 31, 2026 As of July 31, 2026, The Waterfront District BIA continues to maintain a stable financial position. Total assets at month-end were \$142,512.40, total liabilities were \$114,725.50, and net assets/equity were \$27,786.90. Year-to-date net income was \$20,015.89.	

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	Cash and near-cash balances totaled \$65,928.91 at month-end, consisting of the operating bank account of \$59,952.23, GIC holdings of \$5,225.42, petty cash of \$151.26, and \$600.00 awaiting deposit. The July 31 bank statement balance was \$59,982.23 and, after the \$30.00 outstanding withdrawal, the adjusted balance was \$59,952.23. The bank reconciliation was completed with no adjustment required. Accounts receivable totaled \$63,681.38, consisting primarily of \$59,453.04 due from the City of Thunder Bay and \$3,569.56 due from the Canada Revenue Agency. Accounts payable totaled \$24,444.33 and relates mainly to \$13,831.20 owing to 1928020 Ontario Ltd. and \$5,755.86 owing to the Receiver General for source deductions. Current liabilities also include \$42,600.00 in gift certificate accruals, \$21,790.00 in BIA Buck accruals, and a \$6,500.00 strategic plan accrual. These balances represent funds committed to specific programs or obligations. Year-to-date operating revenue was \$161,440.28. Total cost of goods sold was \$33,140.56, and total operating expenses were \$108,022.20, including payroll of \$79,932.95 and general and administrative expenses of \$25,805.18. Strategic plan expense exceeded the annual budget allocation by \$6,955.42, and travel, meetings and conferences exceeded budget by \$2,107.78. Several other program, event, marketing and beautification budget allocations remain available for the balance of the year. Canada Summer Jobs Payroll Note: As noted in June, payroll costs have increased due to the students hired under the Canada Summer Jobs program. At July 31, 2026, year-to-date student wages were \$7,105.74 and Canada Summer Jobs student wages were \$14,224.66. The related funding request will be submitted for fund transfer after August 28, 2026. Accordingly, the payroll expense is reflected in the financial statements before the corresponding funding is received. Overall, the BIA remains in a favourable financial position through the first seven months of the fiscal year, with sufficient cash resources to meet current obligations and planned activities. Motion: THAT the Treasurer's Report and financial statements for the period ending July 31, 2026 be received and accepted as presented. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by: 3. Sponsorship Requests A. Applicant: Hunger (Definitely Superior)	

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	Summary: The Hunger 19 is a downtown-wide Halloween festival on October 31 featuring 52 performance acts across nine venues/stages, 38 bands/DJs and approximately 275 performers. Last year's attendance was approximately 3,150–4,000+ people. The event is intended to activate the downtown, support artists and arts programming, and generate economic benefits through partnerships with downtown businesses. The requested sponsorship includes prominent BIA recognition through Walleye advertising, radio, social media, print materials, event promotion and annual sponsor recognition. Recommendation: Support through in-kind advertising up to \$1,500, as this is a substantial downtown activation with a strong connection to BIA businesses, and the event specifically promotes the Waterfront District as a destination to shop, eat and play. Motion: THAT the Waterfront District BIA Board approve providing \$1,500 in in-kind advertising and promotional opportunities in line with previous years to support a staple event in the Waterfront District BIA. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by: B. Applicant: Belluz Farm Hall Dinner Summary: Belluz Farms, in partnership with Goods & Co. Market, is requesting sponsorship support for the Belluz Farm Hall Dinner. They are leaving the sponsorship amount to the BIA's discretion and would like to provide \$250–\$500 in prizes during the games portion of the event. The BIA would receive recognition through social media, print materials and verbal recognition at the event. Recommendation: \$250 in BIA Bucks. This provides meaningful support while recognizing the direct connection to the Waterfront District through Goods & Co. Market. It also preserves the majority of the remaining BIA Bucks for other requests later in the year. Motion: THAT the Waterfront District BIA Board approve an in-kind sponsorship of \$250 in BIA Bucks to the Belluz Farm Hall Dinner, in partnership with Goods & Co. Market, with recognition of the Waterfront District BIA as outlined in the sponsorship request. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by: C. Applicant: Community Living – Witches Walk Summary: Witches Walk is a community Halloween event that brings participants into the Waterfront District to visit local businesses while raising	

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	funds for Community Living Thunder Bay. The event has been running for six years, with over 185 attendees last year and participation from 10+ WDBIA businesses. ED Note: The BIA has supported this event since 2022, including \$250 in BIA Bucks in 2025. Recommendation: Approve \$250 in BIA Bucks and one available in-kind advertising placement, recognizing the event's ongoing partnership with the BIA, support of a local non-profit, and ability to drive traffic to member businesses. Motion: THAT the Waterfront District BIA approve \$250 in BIA Bucks for the 2026 Witches Walk, plus placement on the LED Board. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by:	
6.4	Infrastructure/Beautification Committee – John 1. Court Street South Update: B. Newman to update. 2. Cumberland Street Update: Construction continues, with staff maintaining regular communication with contractors and the City regarding business access (as needed) and project updates to general membership.	
6.5	Marketing, Events & Promotion Committee – Connor Update: Current priorities include – 1. BrewHa 2.0 2. Development of the CEDC-funded Marketing Plan with Firedog Communications 3. Alignment of future events with Strategic Plan priorities No motions required.	
6.6	Membership Services Committee – Robyn 1. Member Town Hall – September 30, 2026 Update: Due to competing priorities and workload, the September 16 Member Town Hall could not be finalized and communicated to members within the required timeframe. The ED is recommending that the event be	

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	moved to Wednesday, September 30, 2026, from 4:00–7:00 p.m. The Board Chair and Chair of the committee have agreed with the proposed new date. The Town Hall will provide an opportunity for members to receive information and ask questions regarding the upcoming BIA Board election, City projects, parking, construction and other issues affecting the Waterfront District. Staff will confirm the venue, invite appropriate City representatives and circulate member information once finalized. Recommendation: That the Board approve changing the Member Town Hall date to September 30, 2026, and authorize staff to finalize the venue, City participation and event details. Motion: THAT the Waterfront District BIA Board approve changing the Member Town Hall date from September 16, 2026, to September 30, 2026, from 4:00–7:00 p.m., and authorize staff to finalize the venue, City participation and event logistics. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by: 2. New Business Outreach Update: Welcome letters have been delivered to new businesses within the Waterfront District. Staff will continue outreach to new businesses as they open within the district. 3. AGM & Board Election Planning Update: Planning continues for the Annual General Meeting and 2026 Board Election, including preparation of election materials, audited financial statements, member communications, and Board recruitment initiatives.	
6.7	Safety & Security – Peter, John 1. Downtown Core Stabilization Initiative Update: Project Support has been extended through September. Staff will continue monitoring the program and sharing updates as they become available. 2. Neighbourhood Navigator Update: Initial discussions have been held with the City of Thunder Bay and the Fort William BIA. Additional information is anticipated as the program develops. 3. Incident Reporting Update: Businesses continue to be encouraged to report incidents to the appropriate agencies. Consistent reporting helps support funding	

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	requests, resource allocation, and informed decision-making by partner organizations.																																					
6.8	Administration 1. Board Meeting Schedule Update: Upcoming Board meetings - - September 14, 2026 - October 19, 2026 (Adjust due to Thanksgiving) - November, 2026 Annual General Meeting / Board Election 2. Board Nomination Committee Update: Preliminary discussion regarding reaching out to members to apply to the BIA Board. Building out the nomination committee with the Chamber as well as Compass Leadership (based on availability). AGM & Board Election Timeline <table><tr><th>Date</th><th>Key Actions</th></tr><tr><td>Aug. 10</td><td>Nomination Committee struck</td></tr><tr><td>Sept. 14</td><td>Board Meeting: Confirm AGM, election and nomination process</td></tr><tr><td>Sept. 15</td><td>Re-send Building Owner/Tenant Information Request</td></tr><tr><td>Sept. 25</td><td>2027 Preliminary Budget due to City</td></tr><tr><td>Sept. 28</td><td>Building Owner/Tenant Information due</td></tr><tr><td>Sept. 30</td><td>Board Applications posted; first deadline: Oct. 9</td></tr><tr><td>Oct. 9</td><td>AGM Save the Date; First Board Applications due</td></tr><tr><td>Oct. 13–16</td><td>First Round Applicant Interviews</td></tr><tr><td>Oct. 19</td><td>Board Meeting: AGM planning / Nomination Committee update</td></tr><tr><td>Oct. 22</td><td>AGM Notice issued – 3 weeks prior</td></tr><tr><td>Nov. 2</td><td>Final Board Application/Nomination Deadline – 10 days prior</td></tr><tr><td>Nov. 2–6</td><td>Second Round Applicant Interviews / Nomination Committee recommendations</td></tr><tr><td>Nov. 6</td><td>Final AGM & Election Package ready</td></tr><tr><td>Nov. 9</td><td>Board Meeting: Final AGM & Election Check</td></tr><tr><td>Nov. 10</td><td>Ballots and AGM materials prepared</td></tr><tr><td>Nov. 12</td><td>AGM & 2026–2030 Board Election</td></tr><tr><td>After AGM</td><td>Election results submitted to Council for appointment process</td></tr></table> Key Operating Procedure deadlines: AGM notice is provided at least three weeks prior; Board nominations must be received at least 10 days prior to the AGM. Motion: That the Waterfront District BIA Board accept the proposed 2026 AGM and Board Election Timeline, with the understanding that dates not established by the BIA Operating Procedures may be adjusted by the Executive Director and/or	Date	Key Actions	Aug. 10	Nomination Committee struck	Sept. 14	Board Meeting: Confirm AGM, election and nomination process	Sept. 15	Re-send Building Owner/Tenant Information Request	Sept. 25	2027 Preliminary Budget due to City	Sept. 28	Building Owner/Tenant Information due	Sept. 30	Board Applications posted; first deadline: Oct. 9	Oct. 9	AGM Save the Date; First Board Applications due	Oct. 13–16	First Round Applicant Interviews	Oct. 19	Board Meeting: AGM planning / Nomination Committee update	Oct. 22	AGM Notice issued – 3 weeks prior	Nov. 2	Final Board Application/Nomination Deadline – 10 days prior	Nov. 2–6	Second Round Applicant Interviews / Nomination Committee recommendations	Nov. 6	Final AGM & Election Package ready	Nov. 9	Board Meeting: Final AGM & Election Check	Nov. 10	Ballots and AGM materials prepared	Nov. 12	AGM & 2026–2030 Board Election	After AGM	Election results submitted to Council for appointment process	
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	Nomination Committee as needed to meet operational priorities and ensure the election process is completed appropriately. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by:	
7.0	Correspondence 1. 2027 Budget and Finance – Michelle Tolone-Scott Summary - Correspondence received from Michelle Tolone-Scott regarding the proposed 2027 budget and the Finance Committee. Michelle has requested: • a copy of the proposed 2027 budget; • clarification regarding the timing of Board and membership review of the budget; and • consideration of establishing a Finance Committee. The correspondence is provided to the Board for review, comment and direction regarding any response. Recommendation: That the Board receive the correspondence for review and provide direction regarding the concerns and questions raised. Motion: THAT the Board receive the correspondence from Michelle Tolone-Scott regarding the 2027 budget and Finance Committee for review; and THAT the Board provide direction regarding any response to the correspondence. Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by:	
8.0	New Business –	
9.0	Next Meeting – October 19, 2026 Adjournment – Motion: 2026- Moved by: Seconded by:	