



2025 Manitou Association Annual General Meeting

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date: Saturday, July 12, 2025

Location: Drayton Cottage, Georgian Bay

2025 Executive and Board

President– Liz Drayton

Vice-President & Supporting Treasurer–Courtney Bakker

Director–Cathy Coles

Director–Darin Buckland

Director–Kristi Ellenzweig

Director–Stacie Branton

Director (Treasurer ongoing)–Jenifer Martin

Webmaster–Chris Galberg

Welcome

President **Liz Drayton** called the 2025 Annual General Meeting to order and welcomed members to the annual gathering.

Liz reviewed the agenda for the meeting, which included approval of the 2024 AGM Minutes and financial statements, updates from the Georgian Bay Association and the Township of the Archipelago, Association business, and lunch following the meeting.

In Memoriam

Members paused to remember **Rick Jones**, recognizing his longstanding contributions to the Manitou Association and the Georgian Bay community. Rick's friendship, leadership, and commitment to the Bay were acknowledged with appreciation.

The Association extended its sincere condolences to **Cheryl, Kate, Caroline**, and the entire Jones family.

Association Recognition

President Liz Drayton recognized several members whose contributions have strengthened both the Manitou Association and the broader Georgian Bay community.

Sarah Wilson

Sarah Wilson was recognized on her appointment as the Manitou Association's representative to the **Georgian Bay Association (GBA)** Board of Directors.

Liz noted that Sarah's professional background as a senior engineer specializing in Toronto's water treatment and supply systems will bring valuable technical expertise to the GBA, particularly in support of its water quality initiatives. Sarah's appointment also continues a longstanding family legacy of service to Georgian Bay established by her father through his many years of involvement with the GBA.

The membership expressed its appreciation for Sarah's willingness to serve.

Champion of the Bay

The Association proudly recognized **Jamie Drayton** as Manitou's **2025 Champion of the Bay**.

The Champion of the Bay program recognizes individuals who demonstrate outstanding commitment to protecting and preserving Georgian Bay.

Jamie was acknowledged for his leadership in organizing phragmites removal projects, encouraging shoreline stewardship, and inspiring younger generations to become actively involved in caring for the Bay. His dedication reflects the values of environmental stewardship and community leadership that the award celebrates.

Members were encouraged to begin considering nominations for the 2026 Champion of the Bay Award.

Executive and Volunteers

The President also thanked the many volunteers whose contributions continue to make the Association successful.

Special appreciation was extended to:

- the Executive and Board of Directors for their ongoing leadership;
- Association volunteers who assist throughout the year;
- everyone who contributed to organizing the Annual General Meeting; and
- the Drayton family for generously hosting the 2025 AGM.

The President noted that the Association continues to thrive because of the willingness of members to volunteer their time and expertise in support of the Manitou community.

Approval of the 2024 AGM Minutes

The minutes of the **2024 Annual General Meeting**, having been circulated to the membership in advance of the meeting, were presented for approval.

There being no questions or amendments, the following motion was presented:

Motion: To approve the 2024 Annual General Meeting Minutes as circulated.

Moved by: Cathy Cole, Member and Director

Seconded by: Darin Buckland, Member and Director

Carried.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer **Courtney Bakker** presented the Association's financial statements for the year ended 2024.

The Treasurer reported that the Association remains in a healthy financial position, concluding the fiscal year with approximately **\$3,000** in available funds.

Several positive trends contributed to the Association's financial results:

- Continued improvement in the collection of annual membership dues, largely due to the convenience of eTransfer payments.
- Strong participation in the 2024 Manitou Regatta, resulting in a modest operating surplus despite higher food costs.
- Increased participation in fundraising activities, including the annual minnow races.
- Continued prudent financial management by the Executive.

Members were reminded that annual dues remain the Association's primary source of operating revenue and are essential in supporting the Association's website, insurance, communications, community events, and ongoing stewardship initiatives.

The Treasurer noted that while only a small number of memberships remain outstanding, members are encouraged to submit payments promptly. Those with unpaid dues will receive a follow-up reminder from the Treasurer. Members were also reminded that Association membership is required to participate in Association events, including the annual Regatta.

Following the presentation, the membership considered the following motion:

Motion: To approve the Treasurer's Report and the 2024 Financial Statements as presented.

Moved by: Cathy Cole, Member and Director

Seconded by: Darin Buckland, Member and Director

Carried.

Georgian Bay Association Update

Presented by Meredith Denning, Executive Director, Georgian Bay Association (GBA)

President Liz Drayton welcomed **Meredith Denning**, who attended her first Manitou Association Annual General Meeting as the newly appointed Executive Director of the Georgian Bay Association (GBA).

Meredith introduced herself and shared her background in environmental history, strategic planning, and community engagement. She noted that while she was new to the Executive Director role, protecting Georgian Bay through collaboration, advocacy, and member engagement would remain the central focus of the Association's work.

Meredith thanked the Manitou Association for its continued support of the GBA and encouraged members to remain actively involved in the Association's stewardship initiatives.

Water Levels & Water Quality

Meredith provided an update on current water conditions throughout Georgian Bay.

While many members have observed lower water levels this season, she explained that current conditions reflect broader long-term weather patterns rather than winter ice conditions alone. Georgian Bay experiences natural fluctuations over multi-year cycles, and water levels continue to be monitored through Canadian and U.S. forecasting agencies.

Protecting water quality remains one of the GBA's highest priorities.

Current initiatives include:

- encouraging the replacement of older unencapsulated dock foam to reduce microplastic pollution;
- promoting the installation of washing machine microfiber filters to reduce synthetic fibres entering Georgian Bay;
- supporting the **Lake Partner Program**, which enables volunteers to collect annual water samples that contribute to long-term monitoring of lake health across Ontario.

Meredith also introduced members to a developing septic self-testing pilot program that may become available to Georgian Bay associations in future years.

Environmental Advocacy

Meredith reviewed several significant environmental initiatives currently being led by the Georgian Bay Association.

Bill 5

A substantial portion of the presentation focused on Ontario's recently enacted **Bill 5** and its potential implications for Georgian Bay.

The GBA expressed concern that the legislation may significantly reduce environmental oversight for provincially designated development projects while limiting opportunities for public consultation and Indigenous engagement.

Meredith advised that the GBA continues to work closely with municipalities, Indigenous communities and environmental partners to advocate for responsible planning practices and stronger environmental protections throughout Georgian Bay.

The Association will continue monitoring developments as implementation of the legislation progresses.

Vision 2050

Members also received an update on the GBA's **Vision 2050** initiative.

Vision 2050 is a long-term planning project intended to establish a shared vision for the protection and sustainable management of Georgian Bay over the coming decades.

The initiative brings together member associations, municipalities, First Nations, environmental organizations and other stakeholders to identify priorities related to biodiversity, shoreline protection, responsible development and water quality.

Members were encouraged to participate in future consultation opportunities and surveys.

Floating Accommodations

Meredith provided an update on the GBA's ongoing advocacy regarding floating accommodations.

Working alongside several partner organizations, including municipalities and other waterfront associations, the GBA continues to advocate for stronger federal regulations governing floating accommodations in order to protect water quality, shoreline ecology and public safety.

The Association continues to work with Transport Canada and other agencies to encourage consistent regulations across Ontario.

Invasive Species & Aquatic Stewardship

Updates were provided on several environmental stewardship initiatives.

Phragmites Management

The GBA continues to support local associations in controlling invasive **Phragmites** through education, grant funding and coordinated removal efforts.

Members were encouraged to continue reporting new infestations using the **iNaturalist** mobile application to assist provincial agencies in tracking invasive species throughout Georgian Bay.

Aquaculture

The Association remains engaged with provincial regulators regarding commercial aquaculture operations within Georgian Bay.

The GBA continues to advocate for strong environmental safeguards while monitoring proposals that may affect water quality and aquatic ecosystems.

Boating Safety & Public Policy

The Georgian Bay Association continues to work collaboratively with Transport Canada, Parks Canada, the Ontario Provincial Police and other partners on boating safety initiatives.

Current priorities include:

- wake management and shoreline erosion;
- recreational boat noise regulations;
- proposed personal flotation device (PFD) requirements;
- protection of sensitive bird and fish habitat; and
- safe and responsible boating practices throughout Georgian Bay.

Members were encouraged to complete the annual **Your Lakes, Your Views** survey, which provides valuable information used by the GBA during discussions with government agencies regarding future boating regulations.

Champion of the Bay

Meredith congratulated **Jamie Drayton** on being selected as the Manitou Association's **Champion of the Bay**.

The award recognizes individuals who demonstrate exceptional commitment to environmental stewardship and community leadership.

Members were encouraged to begin identifying potential nominees for the 2026 Champion of the Bay Award.

Membership & Member Engagement

Meredith concluded her presentation by emphasizing the importance of continued membership and volunteer participation within the Georgian Bay Association.

She noted that the collective voice of member associations remains one of the GBA's strongest tools for influencing environmental policy, promoting responsible development, and protecting Georgian Bay for future generations.

Members were encouraged to participate in GBA surveys, attend future engagement sessions, and remain active in local stewardship initiatives.

Discussion

A question-and-answer period followed covering a number of topics, including:

- microplastic pollution and wastewater treatment;
- washing machine microfiber filters;
- implementation of Bill 5;
- the proposed TC Energy pumped storage project near Meaford;
- Indigenous consultation and partnerships;
- wake management and recreational boating;
- long-term environmental planning through Vision 2050; and
- opportunities for member involvement in future GBA initiatives.

Township of the Archipelago Update

Presented by Bert Liverance, Reeve, Township of the Archipelago

President Liz Drayton welcomed **Bert Liverance**, Reeve of the Township of the Archipelago, to provide an update on municipal initiatives, environmental stewardship, and matters affecting residents throughout the Township.

Bert began by reflecting on the unique natural environment of Georgian Bay, emphasizing that it is one of the world's largest freshwater archipelagos and a place of exceptional ecological significance. He encouraged members to recognize the important role that cottage associations and organizations such as the Georgian Bay Association play in protecting the Bay for future generations.

Environmental Stewardship & Advocacy

Bert highlighted the Township's commitment to protecting and preserving Georgian Bay through proactive environmental policies and advocacy with provincial and federal governments.

He outlined several initiatives undertaken by the Township, including:

- supporting regulations prohibiting the use of unencapsulated dock foam to reduce microplastic pollution;
- advocating for improved environmental monitoring throughout the Great Lakes;
- participating in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to strengthen regional collaboration on water quality and environmental protection; and
- continuing to advocate for sustainable development practices that protect Georgian Bay's unique ecosystem.

Bert emphasized that collective advocacy through municipalities and organizations such as the Georgian Bay Association continues to play an important role in influencing environmental policy.

Bill 5 and Responsible Development

Bert discussed the Province's recently enacted **Bill 5** and its potential implications for municipalities and environmentally sensitive areas.

He expressed concern that the legislation may reduce environmental oversight and public consultation for certain provincially designated development projects.

Council continues to monitor the legislation closely and is working with neighbouring municipalities and environmental organizations to advocate for responsible planning practices that balance development with environmental protection.

Discussion included concerns surrounding large infrastructure projects, shoreline development, and the importance of maintaining strong environmental safeguards throughout Georgian Bay.

Water Quality & Microplastics

Maintaining the health of Georgian Bay remains one of the Township's highest priorities.

Bert discussed the growing concern surrounding microplastics entering the watershed and highlighted recent efforts to reduce plastic pollution through dock foam regulations and broader public education initiatives.

He also noted the importance of continued monitoring of invasive species, water quality, and emerging environmental threats that may affect Georgian Bay in the future.

Waste Transfer Stations

Members received an update regarding waste management services within the Township.

Bert advised that:

- the temporary closure of the **Sheep's Head Waste Transfer Station** had been related to severe weather and staff safety;
- discussions continue regarding the future of waste disposal services in the southern portion of the Township following the anticipated closure of the **12 Mile Bay Waste Transfer Station**;
- the Township is actively working with neighbouring municipalities and Indigenous communities to identify practical long-term solutions for affected residents.

Members expressed concerns regarding convenient access to waste disposal facilities and encouraged continued advocacy on behalf of seasonal residents.

Marina Pump-Out Facilities

Discussion also focused on marine pump-out services available to boaters.

Bert explained that regulatory challenges currently limit the ability of some marinas to provide pump-out facilities for seasonal residents.

The Township, Georgian Bay Association and neighbouring municipalities continue to advocate for practical regulatory solutions that support responsible wastewater management while improving services for boaters.

Tourism & Georgian Bay GeoPark

Members discussed the proposed **Georgian Bay GeoPark** initiative and its potential implications for the region.

Several members expressed concern that increased tourism resulting from GeoPark designation could place additional pressure on the area's sensitive natural environment.

While recognizing the educational value of the initiative, many members felt that environmental protection should remain the highest priority and that additional tourism should be carefully managed to preserve the character of Georgian Bay.

Environmental Challenges

Bert also discussed several broader environmental issues currently affecting Georgian Bay, including:

- invasive species, such as zebra mussels and sea lamprey;
- climate change and fluctuating water levels;
- increasing wildfire risk;
- shoreline protection;
- biodiversity conservation; and
- the continued importance of protecting drinking water quality.

He emphasized that environmental stewardship requires cooperation among all levels of government, environmental organizations, cottage associations and individual property owners.

Discussion

An extensive question-and-answer period followed covering a number of topics, including:

- implementation of Bill 5;
- environmental assessments for major development projects;
- waste transfer station closures;
- marina pump-out services;
- tourism and the proposed GeoPark;
- short-term rental regulations;
- shoreline protection;
- invasive species;
- water quality monitoring; and
- future environmental priorities for the Township.

Members thanked Bert for his continued leadership and advocacy on behalf of water-access communities throughout the Township of the Archipelago.

Association Business

Presented by Liz Drayton, President

Following the municipal update, President Liz Drayton led members through Association business and provided several operational updates.

Board of Directors

Liz advised members that while 2025 is not an election year, the Association will begin recruiting additional Directors in advance of the next Annual General Meeting.

Several current Directors have indicated that they will be stepping back from Board responsibilities over the coming years, creating opportunities for new volunteers to become involved.

Members interested in serving on the Board were encouraged to speak with the Executive following the meeting.

Liz noted that volunteering with the Association is an excellent way to contribute to the Manitou community while helping guide future Association initiatives.

Fire Protection & Emergency Communications

The Association reviewed the locations of existing fire pumps throughout Manitou.

Members confirmed the current locations and discussed updating this information on the Association website to ensure it remains accurate and easily accessible.

The Executive also reviewed the **WhatsApp Fire Notification Group**, which continues to serve as the Association's primary emergency communication tool.

Recent use of the system during a bear sighting demonstrated its effectiveness, although members discussed exploring additional communication methods to ensure all residents receive timely emergency information.

Association Website

Members were reminded to keep their information current within the Association website and online directory.

The website continues to serve as an important communication tool by providing:

- member contact information;
- emergency resources;
- Association news;
- community announcements; and
- information regarding upcoming events.

Members were encouraged to advise the Executive of any changes to their contact information.

Membership & Community Engagement

The Executive encouraged members to continue welcoming new cottagers to the Association and to promote the benefits of membership throughout the community.

Strong membership remains essential to supporting the Association's stewardship efforts, communications, events and advocacy initiatives.

Manitou Regatta

Liz provided an update on preparations for the upcoming **Manitou Regatta**.

Members were encouraged to participate in the annual event and reminded that the Regatta continues to be one of the Association's most important community traditions.

Information regarding registration, lunch, activities and volunteer opportunities had previously been distributed and would continue to be shared through Association communications.

Closing Remarks

Before concluding the meeting, Liz thanked the Executive, Board of Directors, volunteers and members for their continued commitment to the Manitou Association.

She noted that the Association's strength continues to come from the willingness of members to volunteer their time, share their expertise and work together to protect the unique character of Manitou and Georgian Bay.

Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business, the following motion was presented:

Motion: To adjourn the 2025 Annual General Meeting.

Moved by: Cathy Cole, Member and Director

Seconded by: Darin Buckland, Member and Director

Carried.

The meeting concluded with lunch and an opportunity for members to socialize.