



Balsam Chutes Road Association
Box 62, Bracebridge, ON
P1L 1T5
www.balsamchutes.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

June 15th, 2024

9:30am

Port Sydney Community Hall

The AGM is for those who wish to learn about plans for the road this upcoming year.

Please join us and give your input!

NOMINATIONS

Your nominations committee is currently seeking persons to serve on the Board of Directors.

If you or someone you know, has time to contribute for a term, please contact admin or a board member for a nominations form.

Balsam Chutes Road Association Spring 2024 Newsletter

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

After almost twenty years on the road, I still love turning onto it in the evening and listening to the spring peepers. This year, another welcome sound is that of a woodcock doing his mating song in our backyard. If you haven't a clue what a woodcock is I highly recommend looking them up on YouTube. And with spring comes, seeing neighbours, riding our mountain bikes on the French's/Stephenson's trails and swimming in the river. We are lucky to live here, and we are very fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteers to maintain our road and conduct road business.

It has been my pleasure to serve the community both in my first term as President from 2009-2016 and again these past two and a half years. I will not be looking for re-election at this year's AGM. I have been preoccupied these past few months with other work, family, and volunteer commitments, and so I have not been as involved a leader as I have been in the past. The Board and our bookkeeper, Faye French, however, have been no less busy. I feel grateful that there is a team of people who care enough about where we live to take care of it and I am confident that they, along with new Board Members, will continue to do great things for our community.

Please read through this letter and acquaint yourself with the NEW by-laws which were passed at last year's AGM (on the website). They are both the product of hundreds of hours of work and contain valuable Member information. The new by-laws are a feather in our cap and I applaud Allison Kikauka and Sharron Taylor for their leadership in creating them. Our by-laws have even been replicated, with permission from us, by other Road Associations in the province. So, be confident in the volunteers who make up the Board of Directors. They live on the road and love the road just as much as any of us. If you have any questions feel free to reach out via email admin@balsamchutes.com and I look forward to seeing you at the AGM in June.

Holly Strickland, President, BCRA

BY-LAWS

Updated BCRA by-laws were accepted by the membership at the 2023 AGM. See the website. www.balsamchutes.com

The community guidelines and by-laws (page 4) can be printed for future reference.

FOCA

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) has provided the BCRA with invaluable insight and guidance with regards to many areas of operation.

Please visit their website for access to all their resources:

FOCA.on.ca

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We'd love to have you on a work team or committee...

If you feel you have a particular skill, time to contribute to your community or are looking to meet some of your neighbours and are interested in volunteer opportunities, please contact admin@balsamchutes.com

!! ROAD SAFETY !!

Speeding continues to be a *major* concern for residents of Balsam Chutes. It poses a serious risk to children, pets, pedestrians, and other drivers.

This is a private road with no enforcement tools available so all we can do is advise pedestrians, cyclists, and residents to use extreme caution on the road.

Speeding also deteriorates our road much quicker. It creates potholes, causes gravel to be scattered off the roadway, and contributes to added costs for residents to maintain the road. In the summertime it also leaves those walking on the road in a cloud of dust.

**PLEASE RESPECT THE POSTED SPEED LIMIT OF 30KM/HR
AND HELP MAKE BALSAM CHUTES ROAD
A SAFE PLACE FOR EVERYONE.**

USE OF FRENCH & STEPHENSON FAMILY TRAILS

Please respect the privilege of using the trails so generously shared with us by the French and Stephenson families.

Do not advertise the trails or the chutes.

When accessing the trail system, do so at your own risk and be mindful of the following rules:

Stay on the trails, keep away from the residences and do not make new trails.

Do not take glass bottles to the chutes and take out any garbage you carry in.

Firearms, loud machines and campfires are not permitted on their properties.

Motorized vehicles are not allowed on the Stephenson trails without permission.

DRINKING WATER SAFETY

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) provides free water test kits in Huntsville and Gravenhurst. Visit their website smdhu.org to find hours and locations.

The best time to sample your well water is when there is the greatest chance of contamination:

- early spring just after the thaw
- after heavy rains, floods
- after the well has not been used for a long period of time

RIVER WATER LEVEL

For local waterflow, visit the Government of Canada website <https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/>

- choose Real-time hydrometric data
- choose Station Search
- type "North Branch Muskoka River"
- select View Report

WASTE COLLECTION UPDATE

Beginning May 9th, residents are permitted 1 garbage bag weekly. Recycle and Green Bin Program pickup remain weekly year-round.

Please set out your waste by 7am on collection day.

For instances you may produce more garbage than normal, instead of a trip to a waste facility, garbage bag tags are available at a cost of \$8 each. They can be purchased at any transfer station.

If you need to drop off garbage, the Rosewarne Transfer Station is located just off Taylor Road @ 1062 Rosewarne Drive, Bracebridge.

Year-round Hours:

Mon- Fri	8am-4:30pm
Sat	9am-4:30pm
Sun	11am-4:30pm

To receive collection day reminders directly to your phone, don't forget to download the Muskoka Recycles app.

SPRING/SUMMER ROAD MAINTENANCE

What an unusual winter/spring we have had this year. Green Christmas with snow in late March and all local snowmobile trails not opened at all. Our road has benefited this year from a very competent snow clearing/sanding from Windermere Garden Center and Slush clearing from CATT. The winter road conditions were superb. Job well done! The spring melt also arrived early which required some emergency repair, bringing in some gravel and grading for \$5K.

It was also an opportunity for our road contractors to do some evaluation of potential road improvement projects to upgrade drainage, assess gravel allotments and road widening.

Our current maintenance budget allotment factors 3 gradings, spring, summer and fall as well as snow clearing. Other maintenance items include road allowance brush/tree clearing. Any capital improvement projects are over and above these costs.

We have discussed the potential next improvement project as ditching and culvert placement in the Chutes Rd. section from 200-310.

This area has been problematic for the past few years and needs a long-term plan.

In conclusion, please be mindful of our long-term dilemma that our road will never be up to municipal standards without a massive infusion of \$\$\$\$.

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

Please check our website for information on road fees, by-laws, AGM meeting minutes and FOCA (Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations).

Visit www.balsamchutes.com.

And follow our Facebook page (Balsam Chutes Road Association) to communicate with fellow neighbours and property owners.

PUBLIC ACCESS LOTS

Did you know we have 5 lots on our road that are owned by the Town of Huntsville and are for public access to the river? Please remember to respect the space and keep it clean for the next visitors!

You can find them out at #'s 50, 172, 357, 585 & 591.

ARE YOU 72 HOURS READY?

Although winter is behind us, we can still find ourselves in emergency situations during the fair-weather months. Please familiarize yourself with information on preparing an emergency plan at: www.getprepared.gc.ca

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

& BY-LAWS

Please familiarize yourself with the information on this page to ensure a solid relationship with your neighbours.

Visit the Town of Huntsville website, www.huntsville.ca to view the town by-laws and read "Home Property and Planning" for a variety of information that helps facilitate cohesive neighbourly living.

FIREWORKS BY-LAW #2020-34

Please be respectful of your neighbours and abide by the Town of Huntsville by-law regarding the use of fireworks during the following times only:

Weekends *6pm - 11pm*
(Friday, Saturday & Sunday)

Holidays *8pm - 11pm*
(Victoria Day, Canada Day & Labour Day)

PETS BY-LAW #2021-7

The Town of Huntsville requires that you respect your neighbours by cleaning up after your dogs and keeping them properly restrained upon leaving your property.

HALF LOAD RESTRICTIONS

Half-load restrictions occur every year in the spring on select roadways in Huntsville.

When a half-load restriction is in place, it means that vehicles over 5 tonne per axle in weight are not permitted to use certain Huntsville roads.

Half-load restrictions currently apply to Balsam Chutes Road and will remain in place until May 31st.

For more information, visit the Roads, Sidewalks and Transit page on the Town of Huntsville website.

OPEN-AIR BURNING BY-LAW #2019-74

It is important to stay aware of the current fire danger rating as fires can quickly get out of control leading to loss of property, animal habitat, fines, injury, or loss of life.

For the current fire danger rating, please consult the Outdoor Burning page on the Town of Huntsville website or call 1-877-847-1577 for daily updates.

Out of control burning should be reported immediately by calling 9-1-1.

For reporting during a fire ban, contact the Town of Huntsville By-law department @ 705-789-6421.

NOISE BY-LAW #2018-155

Please respect your neighbours and familiarize yourself with the Town of Huntsville noise by-law which prohibits excessive noise.

The following steps will help reduce household noise:

- Notify neighbours if you plan to use noisy equipment
- Reduce household noise such as music/tv volume
- Keep pet noise to a minimum
- Conduct any necessary noise within the allowed hours set out in the noise by-law

More detailed information is available on the Town of Huntsville website.

SHORT TERM RENTALS BY-LAW #2021-91

The Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) program was initiated by the Town of Huntsville to ensure all rentals operate safely and in accordance with the Fire Protection Standards and the Ontario Building Code. Residents and property owners who wish to rent out rooms or entire units for a period of 28 days or less, are required to obtain a license and abide by the Short-Term Rental Accommodations by-law.

The Town of Huntsville has launched a new 24-hour Short Term Rental Accommodation Hotline for short term rental concerns. To report a concern with an operating Short Term Rental, individuals can call the 24-hour hotline at 705-990-3438 to connect with a live representative.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Please take steps to ensure the safety of your property.

Security cameras & lighting may be a deterrent for theft and break-ins.

If you are going away for a prolonged period, consider letting a neighbour know so that they can keep an eye on your property.

ROAD FEES AND BUDGET REPORT

Road Fees

The Board thanks all those who have paid their road fees. To date we have 57 members who have not paid.

To put the fee in perspective, the cost of one winter driveway clearing contract is almost the same as our fee for year-round access to our properties. We cannot use past costs as a reference, nor consider the percent of increase as unfair because prices have increased drastically. The cost of gravel is almost \$700 a truck load and there will be a minimum of 14 loads purchased for maintenance and likely another 12 or so on repairs amounting to over \$18,000 before equipment and labour.

Please keep in mind that members have 90 days from invoicing to pay the yearly fee before becoming a member not in good standing and therefore subject to collection measures. The Board does not relish this necessity of action as it detracts from the community building aspect of our mission.

You are encouraged if challenged by the 2024 fee to contact roadfees@balsamchutes.com to set up a payment plan. Doing so ensures the Board can proceed with operations planned for the year and allows you to participate in decisions at the AGM as a member in good standing as per Bylaw Schedule "F" which details payment terms.

Schedule "F" Payment Terms for Annual Maintenance Fees

Invoices for annual Maintenance Fees go out March 1st and are due March 31st.

Reminder notices for those who have not paid, are sent out April 30th, 30 days after the due date of March 31st.

Registered letters, for those who have still not paid, go out 30 days after the reminder notices. Fees not paid in 90 days put the member Not in Good Standing.

Members may set up a payment plan by contacting roadfees@balsamchutes.com. A member who has initiated a payment plan will be considered in Good Standing if payments are made according to the plan set up.

Budget

A copy of the budget follows, and the 2023 financials will be sent out next month along with the Notice for the AGM.

Maintenance - Spring grading will commence soon. *Please clean up the road allowance and ditches adjacent to your property to save cost of brushing prior to grading. When pine needles, and twigs etc. mix with the road material it breaks down the surface structure.*

Repairs - In 2022 and 23, 608 tonnes (27 dump trucks) of gravel and ballast stone were placed on the road and in problem areas it sinks into the sub soil and potholes continue to form.

Priority areas have been identified by our contractor James (CATT), and the two areas of most concern are the section by the chute's lane, and the Stephenson end. James proposes a test area of geo-textile at the Stephenson end as a proven remedy for soft roadbeds and the Board is optimistic to try this and will proceed with this project first.

The chutes lane area requires much drainage realignment, including a course established for it to reach the river for the perpetually wet road there. Although both repairs are considered priority, the lane area section requires intensive planning, and co-ordination with property owners. The scope and cost of this project necessitates waiting until next year. We are seeking second opinion and quotes for both repairs to ensure they are completed for the best price.

It is possible the 2024 road repairs and maintenance may slightly exceed their budgeted amounts and if so, after all member fees are paid, the year end balance (also the emergency fund), of \$37,500 may drop by a small amount. We will endeavour to hold these expenses at their budgeted amts however they are relative to conditions and circumstances sometimes beyond our control.

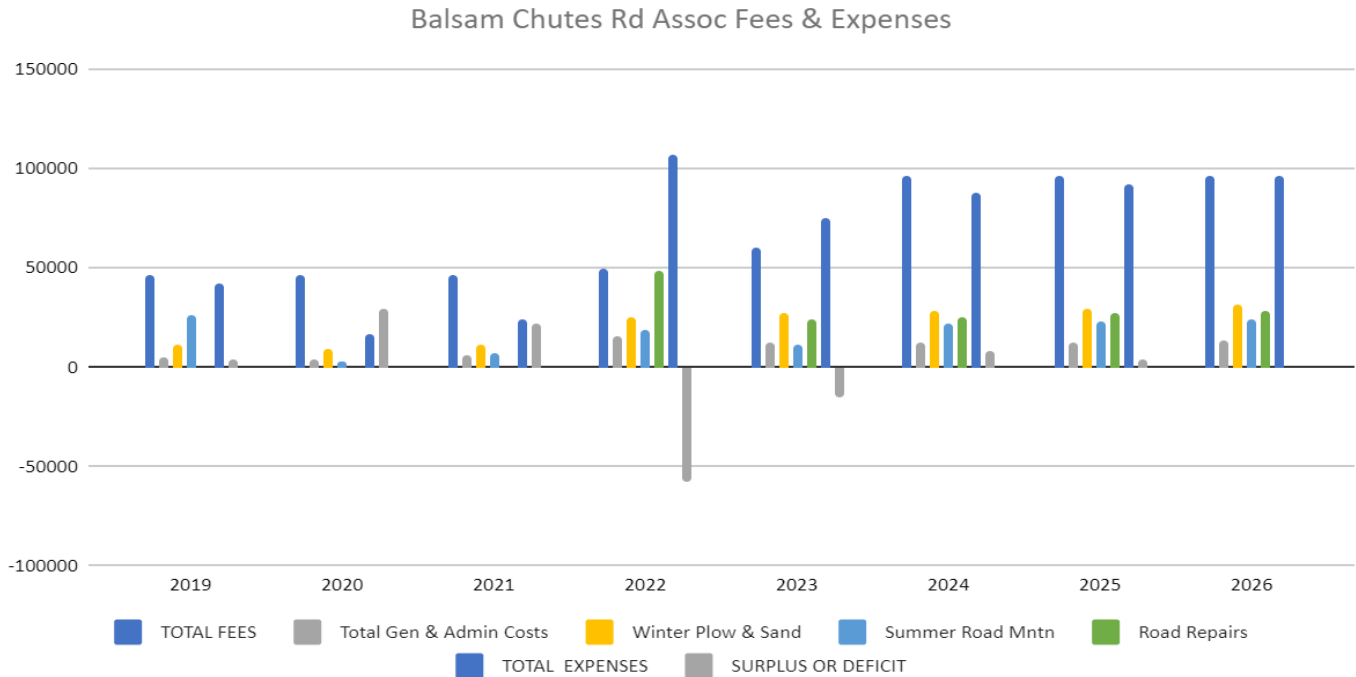
Summary

The association is on track for routine maintenance and some capital improvement yearly with a reasonable reserve for emergencies as close to a \$40,000 bank balance as possible at each year end for the emergency fund.

Fees & Expenses

YEAR	2019	2020	2021	2022	Forecasts			
					2023	2024	2025	2026
Occupied Lots	123	123	127	133	138	141	141	141
Fee	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00	375.00	600.00	600.00	600.00
Vacant Lots	44	44	40	33	28	25	25	25
Fee	200.00	200.00	200.00	200.00	250.00	450.00	450.00	450.00
Culverts				2510.00	750.00			
Donation					500.00			
Interest					202.46			
TOTAL FEES	45700.00	45700.00	46100.00	49010.00	60202.46	95850.00	95850.00	95850.00
Total Gen & Admin	5038.51	3576.22	5830.14	15663.47	12594.73	12000.00	12600.00	13230.00
Winter Plow & Sand	11584.76	9379.00	10913.99	24550.37	27550.00	28000.00	29400.00	30870.00
Summer Road Main	25634.77	3115.98	7216.18	18907.55	10971.14	22000.00	23100.00	24255.00
Road Repairs	0.00	0.00	0.00	47870.66	24193.32	25400.00	26670.00	28003.50
TOTAL EXPENSES	42258.04	16071.20	23960.31	106992.05	75309.19	87400.00	91770.00	96358.50
SURPLUS OR DEFICIT	3441.96	29628.80	22139.69	-57982.05	15106.73	8450.00	4080.00	-508.50
Starting Bank Balance						29051.76	38101.76	42781.76
Year End Bank Balance						37501.76	42181.76	42,276.00

The following graph shows the historical and forward use of road fees.



YOUR ROAD BOARD EXECUTIVES WHO WE ARE & HOW TO REACH US...

Holly Strickland, President
 Kelly Green, Secretary & Social Media
 Allison Kikauka , Treasurer
 Ed Kikauka, Director, Road Superintendent
 Bob Mahon, Director
 Dave Taylor, Director, Nominations Committee
 Sharron Taylor, Director, Nominations Committee

You may contact us through the BCRA email – admin@balsamchutes.com

Email is checked and replied to regularly.