



# MINUTES

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## **ROMA Board Meeting**

**Friday, October 18, 2024**

**9:00 AM – 1:30 PM**

## **HYBRID Meeting**

### **PRESENT:**

Chair Christa Lowry, Municipality of Mississippi Mills (Zone 8)

### **Zone and AMO Rural Caucus Representatives:**

Steve McCabe, Councillor, Township of Wellington North (Zone 2)

Dave Beres, Deputy Mayor, Township of Tillsonburg (Zone 3)

Pam Sayne, Councillor, Township of Minden Hills (Zone 5)

Jennifer Murphy, Councillor, County of Renfrew (Zone 6)

Carma Williams, Deputy Mayor, Township of North Glengarry (Zone 7)

Mark Wilson, Councillor, City of Temiskaming Shores (Zone 9)

Janet Hager, Councillor, Municipality of Red Lake (Zone 10)

Nicole Martin, CAO, Township of Amaranth (AMO Rural Caucus)

Dane Nielsen, Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Grey Highlands (AMO Rural Caucus)

Natasha Salonen, Mayor, Township of Wilmot (AMO Rural Caucus)

Nathan Townend, Deputy Warden, County of Lennox & Addington (AMO Rural Caucus)

Tanya Vrebosch, Councillor, City of North Bay (AMO Rural Caucus)

### **Staff:**

Afshin Majidi, Executive Treasurer, AMO

Judy Dezell, Director Enterprise Centre, Business Partnerships & LAS

Lindsay Jones, Director, Policy and Governmental Relations

Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO

Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO

Alicia Neufeld, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO

Daniela Spagnuolo, Policy Advisor, AMO

Farah Tayabali, Vice-President, Redbrick

Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick

Lora Tigno, Administrative Assistant, Membership Centre, AMO

### **Guests:**

Ellen Sinclair, Executive Director, ROI, Rural Ontario Institute

Kezia Cowtan, Project Manager, ROI, Rural Ontario Institute

Zviko Gwekwerere, RHIS Northern Coordinator, ROI, Rural Ontario Institute  
Danielle Letang, Manager - Data Strategy, ROI, Rural Ontario Institute  
Kathleen Ryan, Senior Program Consultant, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility  
Chris Baillie, Manager, Seniors Programs and Public Education, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility  
Maureen Ennis, Director, Planning and Programs Branch, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

**Early Departures:**

None Identified

**Regrets:**

Jamie McGrail, Councillor, Municipality of Chatham-Kent (Zone 1)  
Christina Early, Councillor, Town of Caledon (Zone 4)

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1. Chair's Welcome and Introductions – ROMA Chair, Christa Lowry

Chair Lowry welcomed members and staff to the board meeting.

Land Acknowledgment:

"We recognize that our work as the ROMA Board, and the work of our members, takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across Ontario. We recognize and respect the history, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Metis, Inuit and all Indigenous peoples whose presence continues to enrich our communities."

2. Declaration

- Pecuniary interest – none declared
- Early departure – none identified

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

3. Approval of Friday, October 18, 2024, Meeting Agenda (*Pages 1-2*)

**Motion:**

***"That the Board approve the agenda for Friday, October 18, 2024."***

**Moved: Dave Beres**

**Seconded: Dane Nielsen**

**CARRIED**

4. Approval of Friday, September 20, 2024, ROMA Meeting Minutes (*Pages 3-12*)

## **Motion**

***“That the Board approve the minutes from the September 20, 2024, meeting”.***

**Moved: Janet Hager**

**Seconded: Carma Williams**

**CARRIED**

### 5. Executive-Treasurer – Afshin Majidi, Executive Treasurer

#### i. ROMA Conference Draft Budget – Afshin Majidi, Executive Treasurer (*Pages 13-19*)

Afshin Majidi tabled the proposed 2025 conference budget. The budget proposed maintaining registration, sponsorship and exhibitor fees at 2024 levels. Expenses related to venues, productions and a/v have been adjusted to reflect anticipated increases as have been seen year over year for the last number of years. The budget also reflects the additional expense for the Sunday delegate lunch as requested by the Board. The proposed budget will result in net revenues inline with the 2023 conference keeping ROMA in a strong position.

## **Motion**

***“That the ROMA Conference Draft Budget be approved as presented.”***

**Moved: Tanya Vrebosch**

**Seconded: Pam Sayne**

**CARRIED**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### 7. Policy Briefing – Lindsay Jones, Director, Policy Centre, AMO

#### i. Drainage, Trains and Drains (*To be delivered*)

Lindsay Jones provided an update to the Board on the issue of actions by major railways including CN and CP related to requirements under the *Ontario Drainage Act*:

Following are the key items reviewed with the Board:

- After over a century of abiding by *Ontario’s Drainage Act*, CN AND CP have refused to:
  - Continue to pay their share of capital and maintenance costs as identified in the *Act*, access to their lands, recognize municipal jurisdiction and challenged their responsibility under the *Act* with the Canadian Transportation Agency rather than pursue legislative appeals under the *Act*.
  - Municipalities engaged in disputes reached out for support after which ROMA agreed to

undertake an intervenor role and supported by AMO staff have undertaken data collection, applied political pressure to both the provincial and federal governments and retained a constitutional lawyer to support this work.

- Municipalities engaged in this issue that ROMA has been working with include Sarnia, Chatham-Kent.
- To date ROMA has supported this work with approximately \$10,000 in costs.
- 2025 will see further advocacy and legal undertakings regarding this matter.

ii. Briefing on Discussion with Minister Calandra at November Board meeting (*Verbal*)

Lindsay Jones reviewed the upcoming Board discussion with Minister Calandra scheduled for the November meeting. ROMA will be promoting its key 2024-2025 advocacy priorities in its discussion with the Minister.

**Motion**

***“That the Policy briefing be received as information.”***

**Moved: Nathan Townend**

**Seconded: Janet Hager**

**CARRIED**

8. AMO Rural Caucus Report Back - Chair Christa Lowry/All (*Verbal*)

Chair Lowry provided a report back to the Board from the September meeting of the AMO Board of Directors:

- First AmO Board meeting for new rural caucus members and Chair Lowry (previously an AMO Board member on County Caucus). Also the first meeting of the AMO Board with Robin Jones in the President Chair.
- The meeting included a Committee of the Whole meeting focused on Board orientation.
- Key areas of focus and discussion included:
  - Caucus reports
  - Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF)- Board approval of the audit
  - Preparing AMO's pre-election strategy
  - Updates on housing and the provinces social assistance reform efforts and
  - An update on AMO's ongoing homelessness advocacy strategy efforts.

**Motion**

***“That the AMO Rural Caucus report back be received as information.”***

**Moved: Janet Hager**  
**Seconded: Dane Nielsen**

**CARRIED**

9. Approval of 2025 Board Meeting Dates, timing and format – Chair Christa Lowry/All (*Pages 20*)

Approval of the 2025 Board Meeting dates was deferred to the November meeting. The Executive Committee will meet to review dates and proposed meeting formats. Recommendations for the Boards consideration will be tabled at the next meeting.

Given that the Executive Committee will be meeting, the Board agreed that the request from the Natural Burial Association for ROMA's support on legislative changes, be reviewed. The Executive will seek to meet directly with representatives from the Association.

**Motion:**

***“That the Board request the Executive Committee convene to review the 2025 Board meeting dates; and that the Executive Committee meet with the Natural Burial Association upon their request to review their proposed legislative changes requiring municipalities to provide minimum maintenance fees.”***

**Moved: Steve McCabe**  
**Seconded: Jennifer Murphy**

**CARRIED**

10. ROMA Communications Update – Farah Tayabali, Vice President, and Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick (*Pages 21-32*)

Farah Tayabali reviewed Redbrick's proposed 2025 communication plan for ROMA. The discussion included a review of the services that Redbrick has provided to ROMA over the past decade and more. Highlighted was the growth both in services provided to ROMA and the growth and recognition of ROMA as an organization and the growing success of the annual conference since 2018.

The review included the period of 2020-2024 and the services supporting ROMA in pre and post as well as onsite conference preparation and delivery, media management and promotion. Redbrick has been instrumental in profiling ROMA on numerous social media platforms as well as packaging and promotion of key policy work of the board of the past number of years.

The budget tabled is commensurate with the 2024 budget.

**Motion**

***“That the Board approve the 2025 Communications Plan and direct Redbrick Communications to implement the plan as approved and that the board approve the 2025 communications budget as presented.”***

**Moved: Dave Beres**  
**Seconded: Tanya Vrebosch**

**CARRIED**

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

11. ROMA Conference Update – Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO (*Verbal*)

Petra advised that conference planning is well in hand and supportive of the Board's direction to undertake conference planning early in the year.

Key note speaker Chantal Hebert has been confirmed with mainstage and concurrent programming in development. The next meeting of the Board will include a review of the program content at a high level.

Registration has been strong with close to 700 registrants just over a month after opening. Both exhibit hall and sponsorship sales have been going strong.

### **Motion**

***"That the ROMA Conference Update be received as information."***

**Moved: Dane Nielsen**  
**Seconded: Carma Williams**

**CARRIED**

## **TIMED ITEMS**

12. 10:00AM-10:30AM – LAS Services and LAS Water and Wastewater Expert Panel update – Judy Dezell, Director Enterprise Centre, Business Partnerships & LAS (*Pages 33-50*)

Judy Dezell provided an overview of LAS Services including One Investment. Judy also briefed the Board on the work underway with the LAS Water and Wastewater panel that is conducting a feasibility study into the provision of these services under the framework of a municipal services corporation.

Judy will continue to apprise the Board of this work.

### **Motion**

***"That the Enterprise Centre presentation be received as information."***

**Moved: Nathan Townend**  
**Seconded: Mark Wilson**

## **CARRIED**

13. 10:30AM–11:00AM - Rural Housing Information System and Rural Community Well Being Indicator – Ellen Sinclair, Executive Director, Rural Ontario Institute (*Pages 51-76*)

### **Motion**

***“That the Rural Housing Information System and Rural Community Well Being Indicator presentation be received as information.”***

**Moved: Steve McCabe**

**Seconded: Janet Hager**

14. 11:00AM-11:30AM - Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility Granting Programs – Kathleen Ryan, Senior Program Consultant, Seniors Programs and Public Education Unit, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (*Supplemental Package*)

Staff from the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility consulted with the Board on a proposed change to existing grant programs that would merge the EnAbling Change Program (ECP) and the Inclusive Community Grants (ICG).

Board members provided feedback including key questions and considerations related to efficiency exercise posing risk to accessing funding, specifically fewer organizations benefitting and whether the move is a cost saving exercise that may impact already struggling organizations.

### **Motion**

***“That the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility presentation be received as information.”***

**Moved: Dane Nielsen**

**Seconded: Carma Williams**

## **RESOLUTIONS SUMMARY (For Information)**

15. Resolutions Summary (*Supplemental Package*)

The Board was advised that staff is recommending a summary of resolutions that provides a snapshot of all resolutions provided sent to ROMA.

Resolutions will be categorized based on topics and reflect the number of resolutions supporting an issue.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

16. Other business brought forward by members

- OPP Billing - the board agreed to address the issue of OPP (Ontario Provincial Police) billing at a future meeting.

### **Motion**

***“That the board to direct the chair to raise the issue of police funding and the increase of OPP billing in 2025 in the next AMO meeting.”***

**Moved: Nathan Townend**

**Seconded: Jennifer Murphy**

17. Agenda items for future ROMA Board meetings

### **November:**

- Meeting with Minister Calandra
- Policy update, SEPR, Broadband

### **December:**

- Healthy Democracy Project
- Workforce Development
- Fulsome ONE Investment discussion

## **ADJOURNMENT**

18. Next meeting: **November 15, 2024 - Virtual**

19. Adjournment

### **Motion:**

***“That there being no further business, the Board move to adjourn.”***

**Moved: Carma Williams**

**Seconded: Tanya Vrebosch**

## **CARRIED**