



MINUTES

ROMA Board Meeting

**Friday, November 15, 2024
8:30 AM – 1:00 PM**

VIRTUAL Meeting

PRESENT:

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

Zone and AMO Rural Caucus Representatives:

Jamie McGrail, Councillor, Municipality of Chatham-Kent (Zone 1)

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

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

Christina Early, Councillor, Town of Caledon (Zone 4)

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)

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

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

Staff:

Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO

Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO

Alicia Neufeld, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO

Bridget Cherry, Senior Advisor, Policy, AMO

Shannon Devane, Program Manager – Municipal Risk Management, LAS

Farah Tayabali, Vice-President, Redbrick

Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick

Lora Tigno, Administrative Assistant, Membership Centre, AMO

Guests:

The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Owen Macri, Deputy Chief of Staff, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Madison Lee, Director of Stakeholder Relations, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Early Departures:

None Identified

Regrets:

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

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

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

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, November 15, 2024, Meeting Agenda (*Pages 1-2*)

The agenda was approved as provided with no additions or changes.

Motion:

"That the Board approve the agenda for Friday, November 15, 2024."

Moved: Dane Nielsen

Seconded: Mark Wilson

CARRIED

4. Approval of Friday, October 18, 2024, ROMA Meeting Minutes (*Pages 3-9*)

The Board approved the minutes as provided.

Motion:

"That the Board approve the minutes from the October 18, 2024, meeting".

Moved: Steve McCabe

Seconded: Dave Beres

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Policy Briefing – Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy Centre, AMO

i. Key Policy Updates (*Supplemental Package*)

1. **Development Charges (DC) and Negotiations:**

- With support from AMO, OBCM and Toronto, Ontario is negotiating with the federal government to adjust draft agreement terms to secure fair funding for Ontario municipalities.

2. **Housing Initiatives:**

- Recent MMAH housing forum focused on municipal service corporations and private communal water systems.
- Municipalities emphasized the need for innovative funding tools for infrastructure and highlighted concerns about communal water system failures and municipal liabilities.
- A strategy for modular housing is in development.

3. **Homelessness and Encampments:**

- AMO advocates addressing root causes like income security and supportive housing. Forthcoming homelessness research report will quantify the scope and scale of Ontario's homelessness challenge and what's needed to address it

4. **Infrastructure Updates:**

- Progress reported on Chatham-Kent's case involving drainage responsibilities with CPR.
- Concerns raised about provincial overreach into municipal decision making under Bill 212 – i.e. bike lane removal.

5. **Municipal Cybersecurity and Energy Legislation:**

- A framework for municipal cybersecurity regulations is being developed.
- New energy legislation will enable the province to develop an integrated plan towards meeting its capacity increases by 2050 with a clean, affordable and reliable energy. AMO advocated for the province to also include a net-zero emissions goal for 2050 in the bill.

6. **Municipal Funding Challenges:**

- Municipalities face increased Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) rates, prompting advocacy for financial support.
- AMO continues to push for penalties in Codes of Conduct reforms.

Motion:

"That the ROMA Board receive as information the AMO policy update".

Moved: Janet Hager

Seconded: Carma Williams

CARRIED

**ii. AMO Pre-election Campaign Discussion – Alicia Neufeld, Senior Manager, Policy Centre, AMO
(Pages 10-15)**

Pre-Election Advocacy:

- AMO is aligning municipal priorities on infrastructure investment, reducing municipal subsidies for provincial responsibilities, and addressing homelessness.
- The goal is to influence party platforms ahead of a possible early provincial election.

Motion:

“That the ROMA Board receive as information the AMO Pre-election Strategy”.

Moved: Jennifer Murphy

Seconded: Nathan Townend

CARRIED

iii. Broadband Update - Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy Centre, AMO (Pages 16-23)

Ontario aims to provide high-speed internet to all residents by 2025, investing \$4 billion in the initiative. Municipalities face challenges from ISPs rejecting fair agreements or using costly construction methods, shifting risks onto local governments. To address this, a new municipal access agreement template has been developed, and the Board approved urging the province to backstop funding for unfair costs. Additional provincial funding includes \$100 million for Starlink satellite internet in remote areas and \$400 million for Hydro One infrastructure upgrades.

Motion:

“That the Board approve AMO policy making a request to the provincial government to backstop funding in the event Internet Service Providers reject municipal service agreement terms and impose unreasonable infrastructure costs on municipalities”.

Moved: Jennifer Murphy

Seconded: Steve McCabe

iv. School Bus Stop Arm Cameras – Bridget Cherry, Senior Advisor, Policy Centre, AMO (Pages 24-28)

The discussion focused on rural road safety, particularly around school bus arm camera programs. Challenges include inadequate data, jurisdictional confusion, and implementation barriers for municipalities. Current issues, such as unplowed sidewalks and dangerous walking routes for children, highlight the urgency. Some municipalities have made limited progress, but provincial leadership and consistent policies are needed to expand these programs effectively. The ROMA board supports further research on the issue and advocacy to improve safety measures.

Motion:

“That the ROMA Board support AMO Policy in expanding its road safety advocacy to include school bus arm cameras and in working with partners to expand uptake and rollout of this safety program.”

Moved: Carma Williams

Seconded: Janet Hager

CARRIED

6. Executive Committee Meeting Report Back - Chair Christa Lowry/All

- i. 2025 Board Meeting Dates, timing and format (*Pages 29-30*)
- ii. Discussion with Natural Burial Association (*Verbal*)

In follow up to the October 23, 2025, meeting of the ROMA Executive Committee, a number of proposals were tabled regarding Board meeting format and timing. These included:

- i.
 - Moving to a bimonthly meeting schedule, on off-month to AMO Board meetings;
 - Conducting meetings in-person to include a Committee of the Whole Meeting the evening prior to Board meetings; and that the Board would meet for breakfast at 8:00am at which time round table discussion on emerging issues would be conducted.

The Board supported the suggested changes.

ii.

The Executive Committee met with the Executive Director and a consultant for the Natural Burial Association (NBA). The NBA was referred to AMO policy staff to discuss the legislative matters they are interested in addressing.

Motion:

“That the ROMA Board approve the 2025 meeting dates as amended and the format of meetings as proposed by the Executive Committee.”

Moved: Nathan Townend

Seconded: Steve McCabe

CARRIED

Motion:

“That the ROMA Board receive for information the update on the meeting with representatives from the Natural Burial Association from the Executive Committee.”

Moved: Dane Nielsen

Seconded: Carma Williams

CARRIED

7. ROMA Communications Update – Farah Tayabali, Vice President, and Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick
(Supplemental Package)

Farah briefed Board members on work undertaken to prepare for the upcoming 2025 ROMA Conference, including logo development, promotions and the development of the slide deck for the Zone Meet ups.

The Zone meet up slide deck will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Board.

Motion:

“That the ROMA Board receive as information the review from Redbrick on its Conference support and recent communications activities”.

Moved: Jennifer Murphy

Seconded: Pam Sayne

CARRIED

TIMED ITEMS

8. 9:00AM-9:30AM – Briefing on Discussion with Minister Calandra – Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy Centre, AMO/All (Verbal)

The Board reviewed its key positions with AMO policy in advance of its discussion with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Paul Callandra.

9. 9:30AM–10:00AM - Discussion with Minister Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of Ontario (Verbal)

The following matters were discussed with the Minister with a focus on rural impact and capacity.

1. Rural housing and infrastructure funding
2. Rural homelessness
3. Rural health care services

Broad band implementation and energy issues were also discussed.

The Minister suggested inviting the recently appointed Chair of the provincial Primary Care Action Team, Jane Philpott, to a future meeting for discussion on rural health care concerns.

Chair Lowry suggested the Minister and staff consider a rural focused housing forum.

10. 11:30AM-12:00PM – LAS Programs and Services – Shannon Devane, LAS – Program Manager – Municipal Risk Management (*Pages 31-55*)

Shannon Devane provided an overview of the programs available to rural municipalities through LAS to address cyber risks.

Motion:

“That the ROMA Board receive as information the update from LAS Program Manager, Shannon Devane, on the risk and insurance programs and activities.”

Moved: Dane Nielsen

Seconded: Mark Wilson

CARRIED

INFORMATION ITEMS

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

Staff provided an update on attendance, programming, exhibitors and sponsorship. All areas are indicating a strong performance for the 2025 conference.

Motion

“That the ROMA Board receive as information the update on the 2025 ROMA Conference planning.”

Moved: Steve McCabe

Seconded: Janet Hager

CARRIED

12. Resolutions Summary (*Pages 56-59*)

Motion

“That the ROMA Board receive as information the Resolutions Summary Report.”

Moved: Nathan Townend

Seconded: Jamie McGrail

CARRIED

OTHER BUSINESS

13. Other business brought forward by members.

Members discussed the following matters and events:

- **ROMA hosted ROI Webinar**
- **MMAH Forum**
- **AMO Healthy Democracy Forum:**
- **Western Ontario Wardens Caucus Conference**
- **Advocacy and Other Updates:**
 - Mark Wilson will represent ROMA at the Good Roads Advocacy Day.

14. Agenda items for future ROMA Board meetings

- An update on the AMO Board signature projects: Workforce Development and Healthy Democracy
- Draft of zone meetup presentation from Redbrick
- Conference update
- MPP Kevin Holland guest participation

ADJOURNMENT

15. Next meeting: **December 20, 2024 - Virtual**

16. Adjournment – Meeting ended at 12:33 PM

Motion:

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

Moved: Dane Nielsen

Seconded: Christina Early

CARRIED